No pay increases for gov't workers–DBM

STORY ON PAGE A2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2001 ★★ 58 PAGES 5 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 63 ₱15

Buenaventura: I will not resign

By Martin P. Marfil
and Clarissa S. Batino

TWO congressmen yesterday said the central bank governor failed to protect ordinary depositors but gave advance warning not only to ousted President Joseph Estrada but also to the BSP Provident Fund about the impending closure of

BUENAVENTURA/ A16

WHAT'S INSIDE
- **Guingona takes oath today** NEWS / A5
- **Tuition fee increases loom** NEWS / A6
- **Graft raps hound Asian leaders** NEWS / A6
- **Gov't sets changes in UCPB, SMC** BUSINESS / B1

THE MAN in the middle, Jose Miguel Arroyo, is caught between the animated conversation of his wife, the President, and former President Fidel Ramos at the Rotary Club of Manila on Thursday where Ms Macapagal is the guest of honor.
VAL HANDUMON

GMA'S CHOICE

'Nothing wrong with Ramos boys'

By Donna S. Cueto

DEFENDING her choice to appoint former officials identified with former President Fidel Ramos to key positions in her government, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said that she was "replicating" a "level playing field" formed under his past administration.

Speaking before the Rotary Club of Manila, the President said she found nothing wrong in staffing her Cabinet with "Ramos boys," including retired generals.

"I don't think it is wrong to recycle any of the people of President Fidel V. Ramos," she said in her keynote speech, reacting to criticism from militant groups that her Cabinet is a mere rehash of Ramos' old one.

Ramos, seated beside First Spouse Jose Miguel Arroyo during the speech, smiled at her remark. So far, the former President has attended almost all of Ms Macapagal's major functions in the first weeks of her term.

"The level playing field was one of the mottoes of the Ramos administration. And we will reenact and replicate the level playing field

NOTHING/ A16

Two of Lagman's killers identified

'Popoy' a rebel with a soft spot, says daughter

By Andrea T. Echavez
and Gerald Lacuarta

ON THE EVE of his assassination, Filemon "Popoy" Lagman went shopping and had dinner with his partner Michelle Caños and his two children, Dante and Iskra, at one of the largest malls in Metro Manila.

"He was ecstatic that night. There was a sale and Dante bought him a pair of slacks. He also tried on a pair of shoes but they were a bit expensive," Iskra recalled with a smile.

"He was so happy in the last few days, always in high spirits," said Caños, who was with Lagman when he was felled by bullets in front of Bahay ng Alumni on the UP Diliman campus on Tuesday afternoon.

The off-white slacks bought by his son became his burial outfit, paired with a green jacket that Michelle gave him last Christmas.

Iskra, 23, described her father, one of the extreme Left's most controversial figures, as "very sweet, thoughtful and a very funny guy."

He was also a very misunderstood man, she told the INQUIRER in an interview at her father's wake at a university chapel.

"People may say nasty things about him. But for those who knew him, he was very sweet, considerate and very levelheaded. He was a

POPOY/ A16

HERE lies a "very funny guy," who chain-smoked through his revolutionary vision of labor's own political party which his supporters will bring to life on the day of his funeral on Monday.
JOAN BONDOC

PNP says suspects ex-NPAs

By Philip C. Tubeza
and Carlito Pablo

"TASK FORCE Popoy" of the Philippine National Police (PNP) has identified two of the four suspects in the murder of labor leader Filemon "Popoy" Lagman inside the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City.

They are believed to be "inactive" members of the New People's Army (NPA), the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, "who have been into drugs."

Deputy Director General Leandro Mendoza, the acting PNP chief, announced yesterday that he had put up a P500,000 reward for any information leading to the arrest of Lagman's killers.

An investigator of the task force said one of the identified suspects was the one who stared at Dante Lagman before the suspect came down the Bahay ng Alumni stairway and shot Dante's father with a .38 cal. revolver.

He was the second gunman to fire at the senior Lagman. But he missed.

Dante reportedly said that he had seen the gunman before.

For its part, the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the

TWO/ A16

Second envelope opened on Valentine's Day

By Christine Avendaño
and Michael Lim Ubac

ON VALENTINE'S Day, the controversial envelope containing documents on ousted President Joseph Estrada's P3.2-billion account with Equitable PCI Bank will finally be opened.

Also ordered opened are records of all bank accounts allegedly belonging to Estrada to determine whether there is a prima facie case for the seizure of his assets.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday that the envelope would be unsealed on Wednesday so that its contents could be turned over to the Office of the Ombudsman, which is investigating plunder and other charges against the ousted President.

It will be Pimentel who will open the second envelope.

The opening of the envelope was made possible by the approval of Senate Resolution No. 927 on Wednesday.

The resolution declared as closed the Senate impeachment court that tried Estrada on charges of bribery, graft and corrupt practices, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution.

The decision of the Senate impeachment court not to open the envelope on Jan. 16, the 23rd day of the trial, triggered public outrage that led to Estrada's ouster.

SECOND/ A7

BAKER'S DOZEN

Gloria to pick 13 Senate bets for ruling coalition

By Juliet L. Javellana,
Martin P. Marfil
and Gerald G. Lacuarta

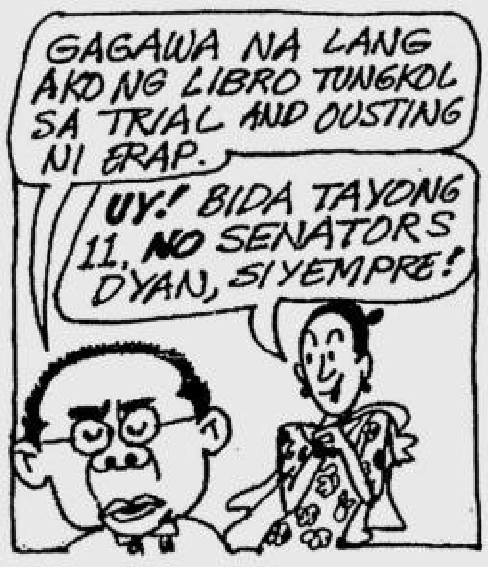
THE PEOPLE Power Coalition last night failed to finalize its senatorial slate for the May 14 elections, and instead gave President Macapagal-Arroyo its vote of confidence to choose the coalition's 13 candidates from a list of 17 names.

Earlier, the Senate approved a resolution authorizing the election in May of a 13th senator to occupy the post vacated by Vice President-designate Teofisto Guingona Jr.

The final coalition slate will be announced on Sunday, party leaders said.

The 17 possible candidates are Senators Franklin Drilon, Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and Juan Flavier; Representatives Wigberto Tañada, Manuel Villar, Ernesto Herrera, Heherson Alvarez, Joker Arroyo, Ralph Recto, Sergio Apostol; former Bulacan Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan; former Sen. Santanina Rasul, lawyer Francis Pangilinan, economist Solita "Winnie" Monsod, ABS-CBN senior vice president Noli de

GLORIA/ A17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UY! BIDA TAYONG 11, NO SENATORS DYAN, SIYEMPRE!

Roco, Tatad, Coseteng bid Senate goodbye

By Juliet L. Javellana

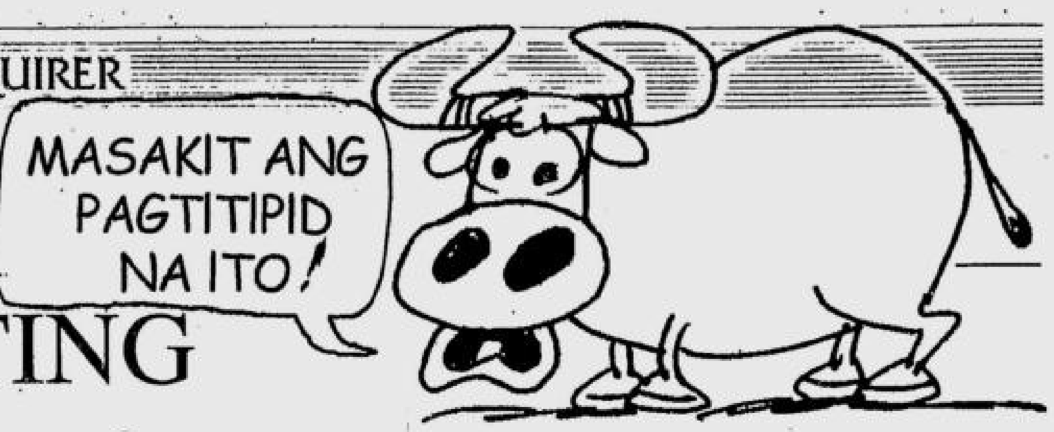
THEY'RE not exactly riding off into the sunset.

Sen. Francisco Tatad will write a book on the "trial and ousting" of Joseph Estrada, Sen. Anna Dominique Coseteng will seek a seat in the House, and Sen. Raul Roco will try to improve the state of Philippine education.

The three, all last-term senators, yester-

ROCO/ A7

Second FRONT PAGE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Gloria to name Siazon ambassador to Japan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo announced yesterday that she would nominate former Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon Jr. as the country's next ambassador to Japan.

Ms Macapagal made the announcement in an interview with six Japanese reporters yesterday. She said Siazon is an expert on Japan.

Siazon, a career diplomat who served as foreign secretary under two presidents, is married to a Japanese national and speaks Japanese fluently. He started his career as an interpreter in the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo.

Siazon was first appointed foreign secretary by former President Fidel Ramos. A high school classmate of former President Joseph Estrada at the Ateneo, Siazon was retained when Estrada took over in June 1998.

His last foreign post before he was recalled to Manila to head the DFA was as director general of the United Nations Industrial and Development Organization.

Ms Macapagal has yet to announce her choice for the post of foreign affairs secretary.

Before the downfall of Estrada, Siazon had officially taken a leave of absence and is now in the United States where he is seeking medical treatment for an ailment.

Siazon's nomination to the Tokyo post will still have to be confirmed by the Commission on Appointments and accepted formally by the Japanese government.

COST-CUTTING

No pay increases for gov't workers

By Gil Cabacungan

THE DEPARTMENT of Budget and Management will freeze government salaries this year and cut the number of government employees as part of cost-cutting efforts to keep the budget deficit under P145 billion.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin also welcomed government's decision to defer passage of the P725-billion national budget for 2001 since this would put on hold the mandatory five percent increase in government salaries this year which would have entailed a P7-billion allocation.

Boncodin said deferment of the budget's approval was agreed upon by members of the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council which met at Malacañang recently.

She said Congress also did not have enough time to pass the budget since its sessions will end next week for the election recess.

The deferment will not leave the government without funds, however. Under Philippine law, in such a case, the previous year's budget is automatically re-enacted.

Boncodin said the Macapagal government was undertaking an austerity program because of its "very difficult financial position." She said the government's main goal is to keep the budget deficit at P145 billion, or 3.8 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Aside from a freeze on salaries, Boncodin said the government would strictly enforce the law on attrition in order to trim the number of its employees which total some 1.1 million.

She said positions vacated by retiring employees would not be filled. She hinted the government might even lay off some workers later this year although this was not yet certain.

Boncodin said the government would push for a supplementary budget of P20 billion from the new Congress later this year to cover additional financial requirements.

Although the government could include the salary hike for state employees in the supplementary budget, Boncodin said this was unlikely as a number of agencies were likely to lobby for additional funding.

Boncodin assured businessmen, however, that the government would be able to achieve its goal of containing the budget deficit without imposing new taxes.

She said the last Congress' approval of measures that allow the Bureau of Internal Revenue to reassign personnel who fail to meet their revenue targets and the Bureau of Customs to tighten its import valuation are expected to boost the collections of these two major revenue-generating agencies.

With a report from Reuters

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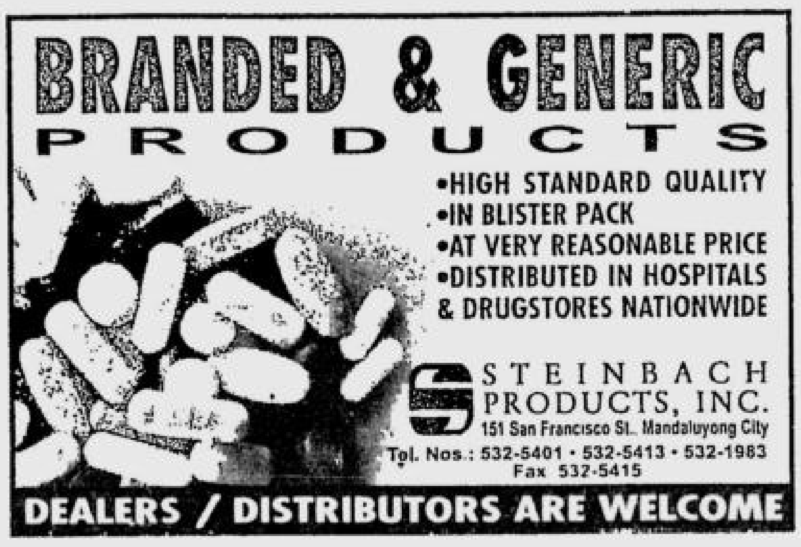
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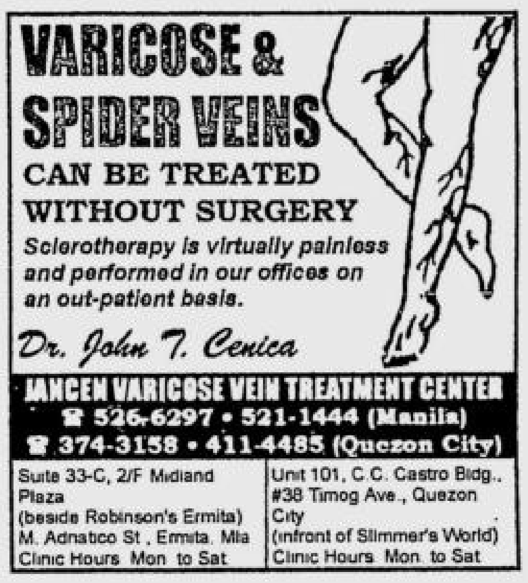
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Ransom talk recycled garbage—Aventajado

By Alcuin Papa

"RECYCLED garbage."

This is how former presidential adviser and chief government hostage negotiator Robert Aventajado described reports that he got most of the ransom that was intended for the Abu Sayyaf bandit group in Mindanao last year.

Ironically, Aventajado was, until the downfall of President Joseph Estrada last month, also the garbage czar for Metro Manila, a job he was not able to properly attend to because the international hostage crisis in Jolo, Sulu, took up most of his time.

"My accusers have not presented any evidence to back up their claim, yet the media, including the INQUIRER, have time and again chosen to reprint the lie," said Aventajado in a letter to this newspaper.

The other day, wire stories quoted the supposed secretary general of the Abu Sayyaf as telling the Malaysian Bernama news agency that Aventajado got the bulk of the ransom that was paid by Libya for the release of 21 foreign hostages abducted by the extremist separatist group.

The official, Abu Abdel Aziz, said his group did not initially ask for money for the release of their captives, but Aventajado persuaded them to include a ransom with their political demands.

Aventajado has denied knowing Aziz.

"This is the first time I heard of this pretender Aziz who claims to be the secretary general of the Abu Sayyaf. I suspect he is a paid hack because as far as I know the Abu Sayyaf is a ragtag gang with no organization, secretary general or supreme leader," he said.

Aventajado said he was a victim many times over of "unsubstantiated accusations" that he got a cut of the ransom which reports said might have been as high as $20 million paid mainly by the Libyan government and Malaysia.

Beijing calls RP envoy on sea incident

CHINA'S foreign ministry has summoned a Philippine Embassy official in Beijing to protest the boarding of four Chinese fishing vessels by the Philippine Navy, officials said yesterday.

Acting Foreign Secretary Lauro Baja said deputy mission chief Elizabeth Buensuceso was called last week and the protest was relayed to her verbally.

The Chinese also demanded that military patrol boats and planes leave the Scarborough Shoal, a disputed outcrop claimed by both countries where the incident took place last month.

Philippine naval officers boarded the four Chinese boats last week after they refused to leave the Scarborough Shoal where they were first seen on Jan. 15.

The military confiscated sea turtles, a protected species that the Chinese had illegally gathered. However, they allowed the Chinese vessels to leave without any arrests.

Baja said the Chinese also objected to the Philippine military's remarks that they were conducting "sovereignty patrols" around the shoal, insisting that the shoal was under Chinese control.

In Beijing, foreign ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said on Tuesday that "the Chinese side has made solemn representations with the Philippine side about the illegal actions by the Philippine side."

We are "asking the Philippine side to effectively respect the territorial sovereignty of China and strictly observe the consensus reached between the two sides on safeguarding regional stability in the South China Sea," he added.

The incident was the latest conflict between the two countries over the shoal, located about 135 nautical miles off the former US naval base of Subic Bay.

In a dispute last year, Philippine troops shot dead a Chinese fishing boat captain and arrested seven fishermen.

China and the Philippines are also rival claimants to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. *AFP*

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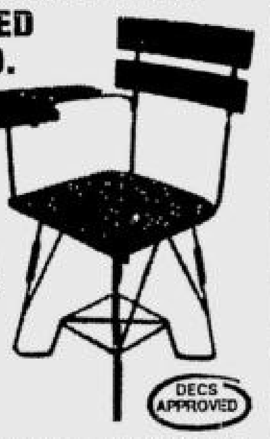

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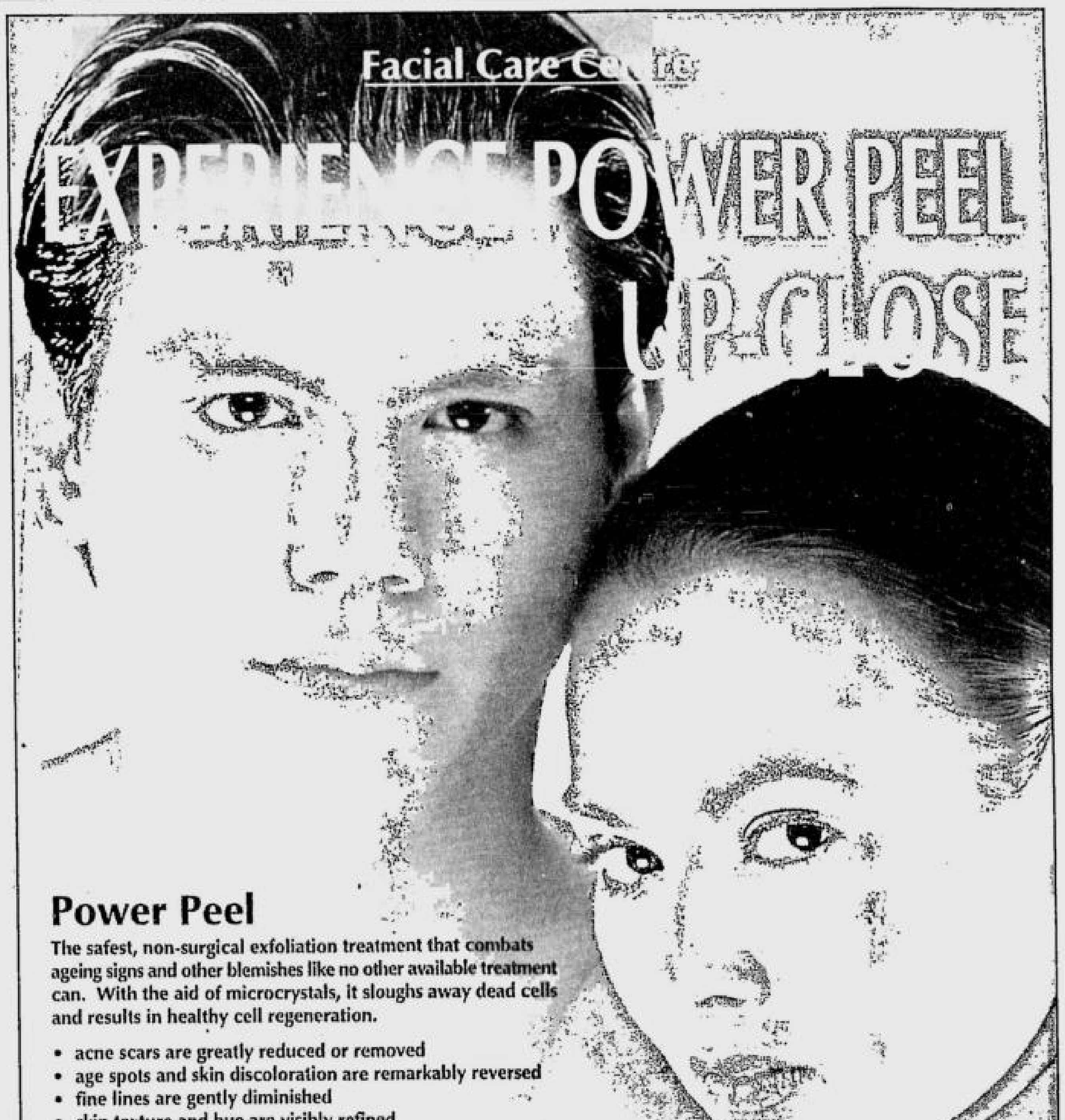
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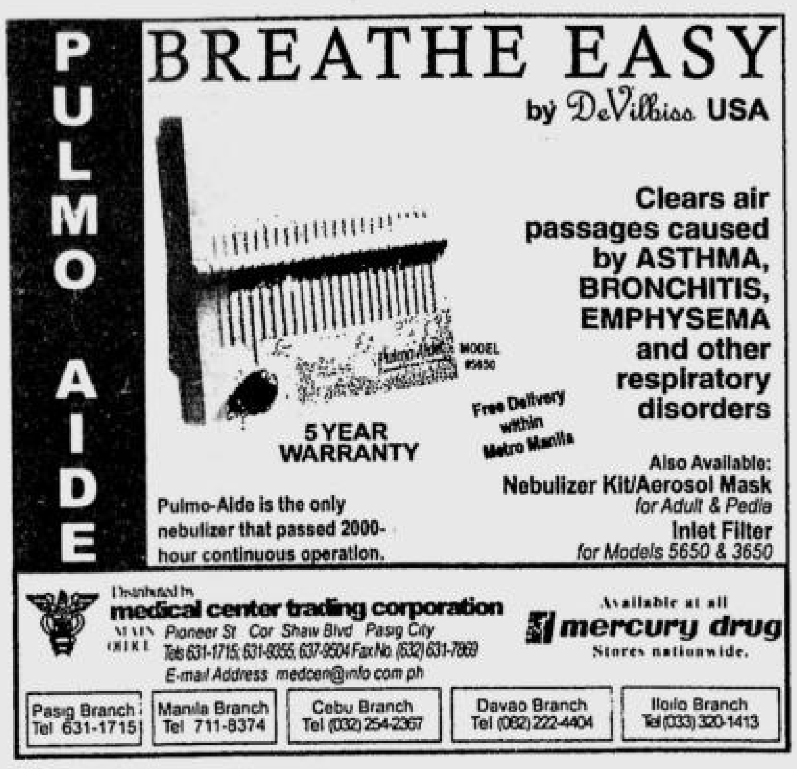
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PNP chief: No rise in kidnaps

By Dave Veridiano

POLICE officials yesterday downplayed the reported upsurge in kidnapping cases in Metro Manila despite reports that still unidentified kidnap-for-ransom groups have abducted at least four people, including a Taiwanese national.

Deputy Director General Leandro Mendoza, acting chief of the Philippine National Police, acknowledged that kidnapping incidents were reported, but said their occurrence did not translate to an upsurge.

"We have to qualify when we say that there is a rise in kidnap-for-ransom cases," Mendoza said.

The new chief of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, Director Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., echoed Mendoza's pronouncement, saying, "Contrary to persistent speculations, the incidence of kidnapping for ransom cases has not increased and there are no indications that they are on the upswing."

Mendoza said PAOCTF agents were closing in on the gunmen who kidnapped a Taiwanese at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Parañaque City.

NEW CLASSIFIED ADS BRANCH

Inquirer board member Paolo R. Prieto, assisted by Classifieds branch manager Ms Emy Limbo, cuts the ribbon during yesterday's blessing of the new Classified Ads branch on the ground floor of the Atrium Building on Makati Avenue. Other Inquirer officials in photo are (from left): assistant vice president for circulation Gloria Lardizabal, assistant credit manager Jimmy Ramos, senior vice president for sales and marketing Rene Reinoso, and senior vice president for corporate services Dave O. Valdes.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Solon hits appointment of new Napocor head

CITING conflict of interest, an administration congressman has questioned the appointment of the new president of the National Power Corp.

House Assistant Majority Leader Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) said yesterday the appointment of Jesus Alcordo as Napocor president is an "obvious attempt by certain groups to protect and promote their economic interests in the energy sector."

Pichay said Alcordo was recommended by the Aboitiz group, which has big stakes in the power industry.

"He is the president and chief executive officer of East Asia Power Resources Corp. which according to insiders still owes Napocor some $600,000 from the purchase of a power plant in Cebu," said Pichay.

In addition, the Alcordo also served as president of the William, Gothong and Aboitiz Shipping Lines in 1998, he said.

"They made a big blunder when they recommended the appointment of Alcordo to the top post of the Department of Energy because it violated Section 8 of the DOE law. Now they are installing him at Napocor," said Pichay.

The section provides that "no officer, external auditor, accountant, or legal counsel of any private company or enterprises primarily engaged in the energy industry shall be eligible for appointment as secretary within two years from his retirement, resignation, or separation therefrom."

The Surigao congressman said that based on records of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Alcordo is the president and chief executive officer of East Asia Power Resources Corp., which is one of the largest independent power producers (IPPs) in the country.

The Aboitiz Group of Companies, he said, has interests in power distribution, generation, and energy services. They includes the Davao Light and Power Co., the third biggest electricity distributor in the country; Cotabato Light and Power; Hydro Electric Development Corp. which is constructing the Bakun A/B & C hydroelectric plants and eyeing the Tagoloan II power plant in Impasugong, Bukidnon.

Pichay had assailed what he described as the onerous provisions contained in the contracts of Napocor and IPPs which he said is the reason for the financial crisis the state power company is facing now.

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Morales thanks foreign donors of land reform

By C. D. Balana

OUTGOING Agrarian Secretary Horacio Morales has thanked all foreign donors and international financial institutions for helping the government implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in the past two years.

Morales said the unwavering support of the country's donor friends has helped improved the standards of living in the so-called agrarian reform communities nationwide.

The donors included the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the United Nations Development Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the governments of Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands.

"Their support is very crucial in effecting development in our agrarian reform communities," Morales said during a recent farewell party with a group of foreign donors.

"The much-needed assistance they have generously provided has encouraged our beneficiaries to work harder and increase their productivity," he added.

Morales acknowledged that without these donors, the CARP would have not gone far.

Rep. Hernani Braganza, Morales' successor, will officially call the shot at the DAR on Monday.

Morales also noted the sharp increase in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) poured into the Philippines for its sustainable rural development program.

The ODA, he said, reached P35 billion during the administration of former President Joseph Estrada. It is more than triple the P10-billion assistance generated by the two previous administrations prior to Estrada's.

Morales, likewise, urged foreign donor representatives in the country to be as supportive with the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo to ensure that the gains of the government in the fight against poverty would continue to deliver fruits.

For their part, the foreign donors cited Morales for his "openness" and for his innovative ideas in the pursuit of the government's poverty alleviation and food security program.

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Guingona takes oath today

By Juliet L. Javellana and Norman Bordadora

TEOFISTO Guingona Jr. takes his oath today as Vice President of the Philippines, saying he was happy with the post and would not seek another public office in 2004.

"I will just help in the implementation of the President's programs after we have restored governance," said Guingona, who was perceived to be the least threatening among vice presidential contenders to the reported plan of Ms Macapagal to seek reelection in 2004.

"No more. I am content with this (position)," he replied when asked if he had plans for public office beyond 2004.

Guingona will take his oath before Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. at 4 p.m. at Malacañang.

Guingona also defended the President's reported plan to appoint him concurrent secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the face of opposition from DFA staffers and others.

He said the appointment of a foreign secretary was a political decision and he was prepared to take the job.

Some DFA officers and staffers reportedly want Ms Macapagal to name a secretary from their ranks.

Guingona, who was Senate minority leader before his nomination, was replaced in that chamber by Sen. Renato Cayetano. Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste was named assistant minority leader.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines said it wants Guingona, who hails from Mindanao, to use his new position to become an instrument of peace between Christians and Muslims in the region.

Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, CBCP president, said Guingona should listen to the collective voice of all Mindanaoans and push for the continuation of the peace process in southern Philippines.

"He is a plus factor for Mindanao. He should promote peace," said Quevedo.

Msgr. Hernando Coronel, CBCP media director, said Guingona's roots in Misamis Oriental is definitely an asset that the administration could use to heal the wounds of war in the region.

"(Guingona) is from Mindanao. He can be an instrument for the promotion of peace in the area," said Coronel.

Guingona and another Mindanaoan, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. of Cagayan de Oro City, were the strongest contenders for the vice presidential post because of their links to the southern Philippines, which historically has been neglected by the government whose seat is in Metro Manila.

The neglect was compounded by the declaration in September 2000 by former President Joseph Estrada of an all-out war against Muslim separatists who were pushing for a separate state.

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Erap's VP: Why not Dilangalen?

By Alcuin Papa

VICE President Dilangalen?

A lawyers' group suggested yesterday that Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen should appoint himself as the second most powerful person in the country before he questioned the appointment of Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

"How do you solve a problem like Dilangalen? In order for Cong. Dilangalen to have the proper personality to question Vice President Teofisto Guingona's appointment, Dilangalen should have himself appointed as the Vice President of 'President' Joseph Estrada," said the Concerned Lawyers for Moral and Effective Leadership, or Clamor.

The group added that since Ms. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had abandoned the vice presidency under the Estrada administration, the "Estrada presidency" was now vacant.

"We believe that Dilangalen deserves to become Estrada's Vice President," it declared.

In the House's session Wednesday night, lawmakers unanimously passed a resolution confirming Guingona's nomination when Dilangalen left the session hall. Dilangalen had earlier extended the discussion on the resolution by questioning its legality.

Upon his return, Dilangalen insisted that the measure was illegal and engaged Makati Rep. Joker Arroyo and Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez in a heated debate. The session was later suspended.

"Congressman Dilangalen should show that he is not merely clowning around. If he is serious, he should lead in reorganizing the 'Estrada administration' that they are talking about," said Dennis Funa, Clamor head convenor.

In addition, Clamor said, since former executive secretary Edgardo Angara had resigned, Rep. Rudy Fariñas, another staunch supporter of the ousted president, should be appointed as Estrada's executive secretary.

"All of this of course is subject to a later Supreme Court decision on the legitimacy of Macapagal's presidency. If the Supreme Court rules that Macapagal is the legitimate president, then Dilangalen and Farinas should admit that they were fools," Funa said..

Saguisag: Lift travel ban on Zamoras, or else...

By Volt Contreras

A LAWYER of ousted President Joseph Estrada threatened yesterday to sue Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and Ombudsman Aniano Desierto for human rights violations in connection with the travel ban imposed on former executive secretary Ronaldo Zamora and his brother, businessman Manny Zamora.

Former senator Rene Saguisag said Perez should strike the brothers off the hold-departure order list he issued Jan. 23, three days after Estrada's ouster.

The order, covering 27 persons led by Estrada, was issued upon the request of the Ombudsman, who called attention to the various criminal charges being filed against the deposed president and his associates, including former first lady Luisa Ejercito and the couple's son, San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada.

Saguisag argued the Zamora brothers had nothing to do with the charges raised against Estrada in his aborted impeachment trial.

"Yet they were lumped together in that list," Saguisag said in an interview yesterday.

On Monday, the veteran human rights lawyer announced that he was also giving free legal services to Estrada in his challenge before the Supreme Court of the legitimacy of President Macapagal's assumption to the presidency.

He also wrote Perez yesterday assailing the Justice chief particularly for "looking up to the current Ombudsman...as some kind of oracle of the law."

"I am disappointed that...you should defer to the judgment of one of the implementors of martial law on a human rights case," he said.

Saguisag first wrote Perez Jan. 24 to argue that the brothers' basic right to travel was violated by the hold order, saying such right "can only be limited by the requirements of national security, public safety, or public health."

Replying six days later, Perez turned down Saguisag's appeal to lift the order on the Zamoras, saying his department was bound by State policy to render any assistance that might be requested by the Ombudsman in the pursuit of criminal justice.

In the second letter he sent yesterday, Saguisag served notice to Perez "that unless you lift the hold-departure orders on the Zamora brothers, we will have to sue you and the Ombudsman for grossly violating their human and constitutional right to travel.".

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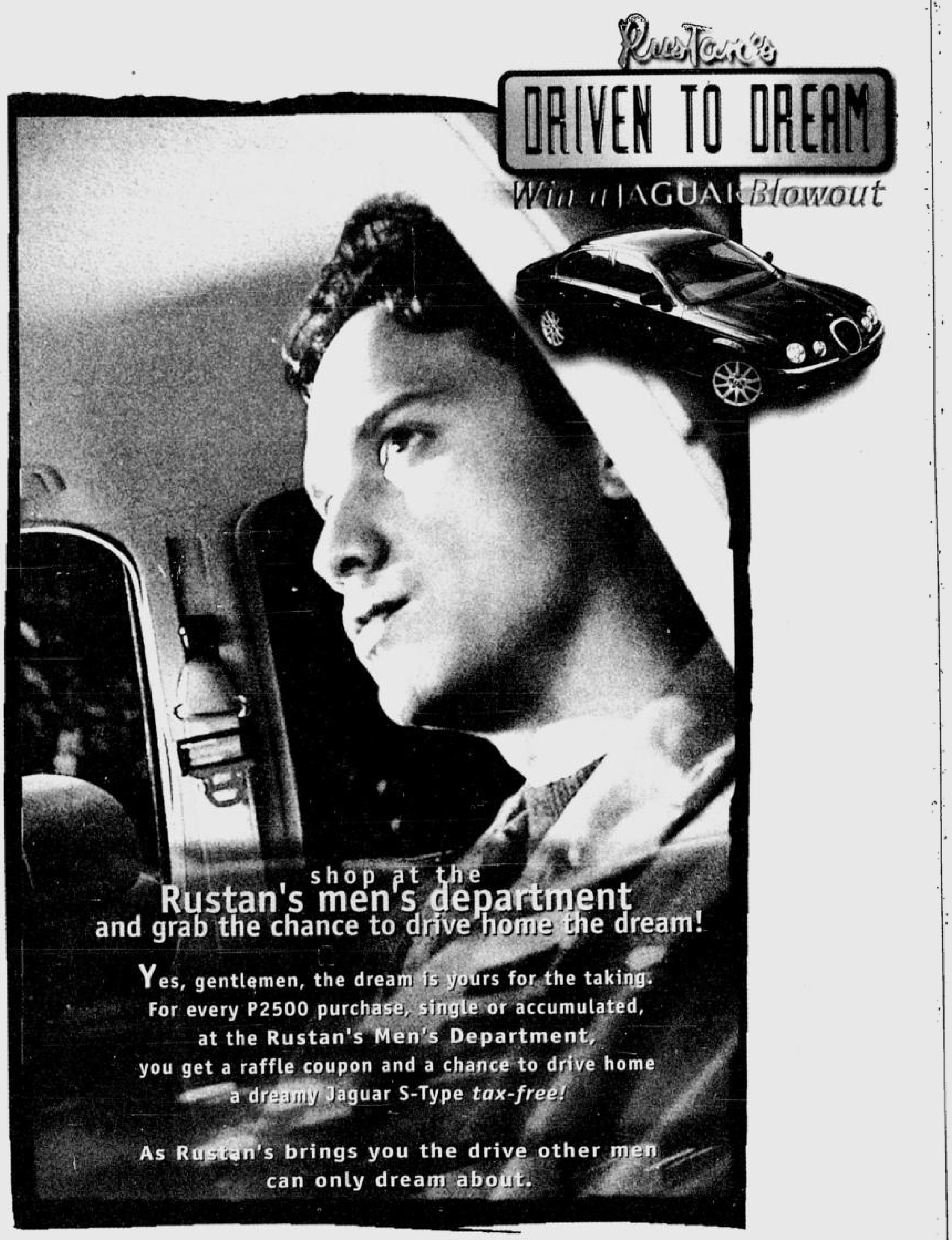

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Tuition increases loom

ANOTHER round of tuition increases, some expected to be as much as 100 percent, appears to be in the offing with the start this week of consultations regarding fee increases in various colleges.

Students have pounced on the consultations, scheduled every February, as an occasion to accuse President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose assumption to the presidency was boosted by massive youth support, of being indifferent to their interests.

The College Editors Guild of the Philippines, a leading anti-Estrada group, lamented that the President had been giving the youth the "cold treatment" while giving priority to the military, to which she recently promised an P82-billion budget.

"It is a serious neglect on her part not to address legitimate youth issues such as perennial tuition increases," said CEGP secretary general Ronalyn Olea, whose group has been waging an uphill battle to stop the annual round of fee increases.

The CEGP is incensed at tertiary schools, especially those based in Metro Manila, which raise their tuition and miscellaneous charges every year by an average of 20 percent.

The CEGP moreover believes the University of the Philippines is also poised to raise tuition.

CEGP president Rey Asis said discussions on the rebracketing of UP's Socialized Tuition Fee Assistance Program had been heating up at the top level of the UP administration because of a proposal to create an additional bracket for students who would be required to pay P600 per unit.

The largest state university, with an enrolment of around 50,000 students, currently charges P300 per unit, up from P150 per unit, as a result of a previous rebracketing scheme of the STFAP in 1991.

In 1989, the tuition shot up from P60 per unit to P150 when the STFAP rebracketing scheme was implemented.

This pattern should serve as enough warning to UP students, said Asis.

"It would double the tuition, and at a time when the government has been slashing huge chunks off the budget for education," Asis said.

He added the President did not seem to care that the students were fighting for their basic right to affordable quality education.

Olea said Ms Macapagal should not forget Estrada earned the ire of the youth because of his neglect of social services such as affordable quality education and his giving priority to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"The youth do not deserve this kind of cold treatment from the President after our worthy participation in the campaign to oust President Estrada," the CEGP said.

"The CEGP still challenges the Macapagal administration to immediately take serious actions to finally stop tuition increases that have long been punishing students and our parents," it added.

Blanche Rivera

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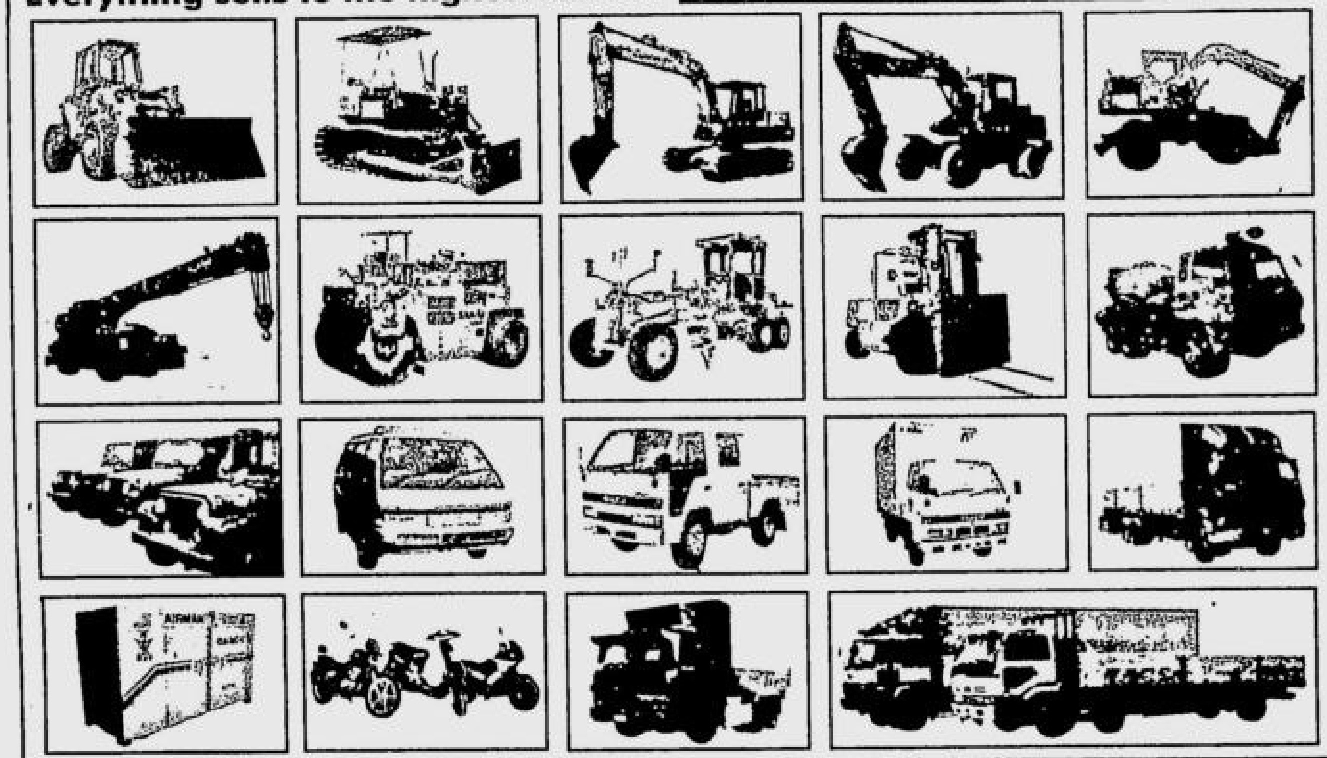

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Anti-corruption heat is on Asian leaders

BANGKOK—For decades, Asia's ruling elites have plundered their countries for personal enrichment. Politicians and senior bureaucrats have skimmed budgets, accepted kickbacks and reveled in the ill-gotten gains.

Ex-Indonesian autocrat Suharto allegedly stashed away billions of dollars during his 32 years in power. Thailand's "buffet Cabinet" was notorious for helping itself to the state budget in the early 1990s. Former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos became an icon of corrupt excess for her legendary shoe collection.

But recently the tables have been turned—Asian leaders from Japan to Indonesia are becoming targets of anti-corruption forces.

Not that Asia is going to clean up its act tomorrow. High-profile graft cases often stem not from the demands of good government crusaders, but from charges by political opponents of the accused. Still, the days of unbridled corruption are unlikely to return.

Financial turmoil in the late 1990s, which ended two decades of prosperity, highlighted the corrosive effects of cronyism. This prompted democratic reforms that now make leaders increasingly vulnerable to charges of graft.

Less tolerant

"The middle classes that have emerged (during the economic boom) have become less tolerant of corruption," said Stephen Young, an American analyst of Southeast Asia. "This has created a new political dynamic that leaves leaders far more exposed than ever before to charges of corruption."

In January, former movie star Joseph Estrada was ousted from the Philippine presidency amid huge street demonstrations after a drinking buddy said he provided Estrada with $8 million in payoffs from illegal gambling and $2.7 million from tobacco taxes.

Soon after, Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid was censured by Parliament for alleged involvement in two corruption scandals involving $6 million in state funds and donations from the Sultan of Brunei. Wahid could now face impeachment.

Popular discontent with corruption is also forcing one-party regimes like China and Vietnam to mete out tough—if selective—punishment for senior officials, including execution.

"The issue of corruption has emerged as one of the trump cards played in factional politics in Asia," said Young, executive director of the Swiss-based Caux Roundtable, which advocates principled leadership in business.

"Estrada went down because the political elite decided they didn't want him anymore. And if the Indonesian military and (Vice President) Megawati Sukarnoputri had said, 'Let's stick by Wahid,' the accusations would have gone nowhere," he said.

Squeaky clean

Corruption in Asia, with notable exceptions like squeaky-clean Singapore, is rife among police, military and government officials, partly due to low salaries. Paying bribes is often seen as the only way to get something done.

A survey in the Philippines said 62 percent of the people thought judges could be bribed. In Thailand, a study estimated at least 20 percent of the state budget—160 billion baht ($3.7 billion) annually—ends up in officials' pockets. The Asian Development Bank estimates that up to one-third of public investment in many Asian countries is squandered on graft.

Paul Kratoska, a history professor at Singapore's National University, said there was a common belief outside the region that most people in Asia accept graft as the norm.

"But they don't. They feel very frustrated," he said. The problem is that people don't know how to change age-old, entrenched systems of corruption, he said.

High-profile cases brought against political figures have provided hope that the tide is turning.

In Thailand, a reformist constitution adopted at the height of the Asian economic crisis in 1997 has come as a rude shock to lawmakers and bureaucrats.

A state counter-corruption commission once derided as a "paper tiger" has used new powers granted under the charter to end the political career of a former interior minister and indict incoming prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, probably Thailand's richest man.

Thaksin could be kicked out within months of taking office if the Constitutional Court upholds a commission ruling that he tried to conceal his wealth by giving false asset declarations.

"The commission has delivered results," said Deunden Nikomborirak, a researcher on corruption for the Thai Development Research Institute. "But it doesn't mean corruption will become less. It's just going to make people more careful."

In Japan, citizens have long shrugged off reports of corruption in the Liberal Democratic Party, which has ruled virtually without interruption since 1955. People consoled themselves by saying they had a "first-rate economy and third-rate politics."

Changing attitudes

But a prolonged economic malaise and recent scandals have changed attitudes. Corruption is expected to dominate the current session of Parliament.

One of Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's senior economic policy makers was forced to resign in an influence-peddling scandal in late January. Less than a week later, the Foreign Ministry sacked a 37-year career bureaucrat suspected of embezzling at least 54.8 million yen ($467,576).

In China, a nearly decade-long fight against pervasive corruption has quickened over the past year. The ruling Communist Party has prosecuted and executed several high-level miscreants, a legislative vice chairman and a provincial vice governor among them.

But corruption is so widespread that the campaign to most Chinese seems selective. Its purpose seems to be power, and its victims are seen as losers in struggles among leaders operating in a closed political system not subject to checks and balances.

"The anti-corruption campaign won't improve the party's reputation in the eyes of the people. But it will increase control over the rank-and-file from above," said Wu Guoguang, a China watcher at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

In Indonesia, Wahid has had little success in an anti-graft campaign since he took office 15 months ago as the country's first freely elected leader in more than four decades.

Weak government

Corruption was rampant during the former dictator Suharto's 32-year military rule, and some businessmen say it has only gotten worse under Wahid because his government is weak.

"Only a few of Wahid's Cabinet ministers support the anti-corruption drive. The military does not," said Dede Oetomo, a political analyst and lecturer at Airlangga University in Surabaya, Indonesia.

He sees the graft allegations against Wahid as politically motivated.

"People from the Suharto era are sending a message to Wahid: Don't mess with us and stop trying to reform things," he said.

"These cases are so minor compared to what Suharto took."

Still, the Southeast Asian analyst Young thinks corruption could eventually be stopped by globalization and the pressure for Asian companies to be competitive around the world. But he says it could take 20 years to do it.

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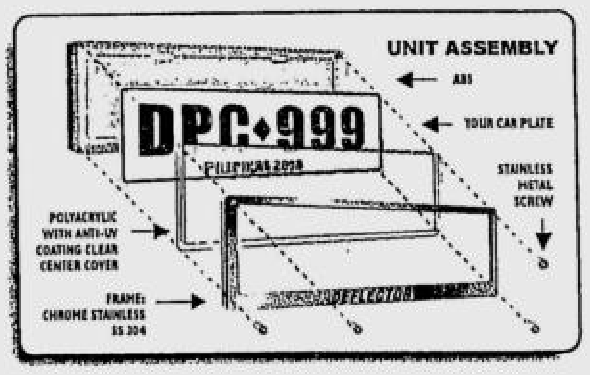

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Roco, Tatad, Coseteng bid Senate goodbye

(From page A1)

day bid the Senate goodbye after having played, along with 18 others, their most historic role—as judges in Estrada's impeachment trial.

They were to have formally ended their Senate terms at the final closing of the 11th Congress on June 7. But Roco delivered his valedictory yesterday because he will take his oath as education secretary on Feb. 14.

The three are among 12 outgoing senators, of whom seven—Franklin Drilon, Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Juan Flavier, Sergio Osmena III, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Gregorio Honasan and Juan Ponce Enrile—are still qualified for reelection.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and the late Senate President Marcelo Fernan were former senators with terms ending this year.

Tatad and Coseteng were among the 11 senator-judges whose vote against the opening of documents containing evidence potentially damaging to Estrada triggered People Power II.

Roco, who was among the 10 who voted "yes," initially planned to return to the House. But Ms Macapagal appointed him education secretary.

Sentimental

Roco hopes to improve the state of education and the plight of teachers—and, probably, add their massive numbers to his chances in the 2004 presidential race.

In his "graduation" speech, Roco turned sentimental and chose to thank first the Senate security guards, janitors, waiters, medical staff, his office and committee staff, and pages who never had the limelight in the historic chamber.

He said he would miss the one-minute suspension of sessions, which at one time lasted for a whole afternoon.

"I will miss the executive sessions where we are told to keep secrets, only to find out when we leave the room that it had already been announced in the evening news," he said.

Roco alternately thanked and praised his colleagues, including his old friend, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

"He says I'm ignoring him when I'm his only friend. But even during the times when he was incarcerated, I made sure that he had a supply of beer," Roco said.

The "graduating" senator also said he was proud to be part of the most historic Senate ever.

"We had the (RP-US) VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement). It was a grand debate, and something we would want to remember. We were the first impeachment court of the Republic of the Philippines, and for the next 100 years, it will be referred to as the impeachment court. All of us, whatever we did, will be remembered. It opened our eyes," he said.

He asked for the support of the Senate in his next undertaking—to revolutionize Philippine education.

Memorable

Asked to name the most memorable part of his stay in the Senate, Tatad laughed and said: "The impeachment trial and its sudden interruption by people power."

He said his "no" vote was not "a sinful act" but "an act of conscience."

"The constitutional process could not accommodate it, so it led to an extra-constitutional process," he said. "I believe that when history is written, when passions shall have cooled down, they'll be able to see the logic . . . in what we did and probably accord us some recognition for what we tried to do."

Tatad said the fateful Senate vote on Jan. 16 and the People Power II that swiftly followed merely showed that the impeachment process was "not as big as the political process that was taking place all over the country."

"The judgment we were expected to render would not be rendered in the impeachment court because the entire nation was looking at all charges against Estrada. Unfortunately, we can only be guided by the articles of impeachment," he said.

Tatad had earlier said that his neighbors at La Vista Subdivision in Quezon City, particularly relatives of Ms Macapagal, harassed him and his family after the Jan. 16 vote.

But now they are kinder to him, he said.

Tatad plans to retire from public service and write a book. Only 29 when appointed to the Marcos Cabinet, he is also a former journalist.

"I'll be doing serious writing. I'm now working on my first book project, which is the trial and ousting of Joseph Ejercito Estrada," he said.

"I became one of the principal players without my wanting to be. I was thrust into the vortex of the drama, and the documentation is complete, so it's not a difficult job to do," he said.

The book "will be refined to suit the market," Tatad said, adding: "I'm thinking international."

Teary eyed

Coseteng was close to tears when asked if she regretted her vote at the trial.

"I have never really been asked about my side," she told the INQUIRER. "Maybe one day, when we are able to explain, then people will understand. I only ask that people have an open mind . . .

"Maybe I made mistakes in the past, either personally or officially, but I'm not the kind of person who regrets. I try to do better next time, pick up the pieces and count on (my) track record."

Coseteng, a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition, will seek the congressional seat for the third district of Quezon City, a post she held before she became a senator.

The post will be vacated by Rep. Michael Defensor, who has been named housing chief.

Coseteng will be up against two relatively neophyte rivals.

She does not discount the possibility that her "no" vote will cost her many votes. But she is standing by her conviction.

"We do not expect the people to agree with us all the time. That is the essence of democracy," she said.

Longest running

Roco called Estrada's impeachment trial the "longest running movie in the Philippines."

"And it is a movie where everybody participated in . . . It is the only movie of its kind," he said.

Asked for his assessment of how the 11th Congress fared, Pimentel said: "I don't think we did anything earthshaking. We did what was normally expected of us."

But he admitted that the Senate could have done more had there been no impeachment trial, which, he said, "derailed our timetable and work schedules."

Last night at the House, lawmakers shook hands and hugged one another as the "Auld Lang Syne" played in the background.

The chamber's last regular session day ended when Speaker Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte banged the gavel at 6:53 p.m.

Belmonte admitted to some shortcomings and thanked his colleagues for his three-week stint.

He also hinted of a possible special session when he said everyone might meet before June.

Among the issues expected to be taken up in the special session are the controversial Omnibus Power Bill and the crafting of a supplemental budget in place of the General Appropriations Act. *With reports from Christine Avendaño and Martin P. Marfil*

Second . . .

(From page A1)

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto said his order would compel at least nine local banks to turn over records of bank statements of some P10 billion in secret accounts believed to be Estrada's.

Private prosecutors, who filed the forfeiture complaint on Wednesday, identified the banks as the Rizal Commercial and Banking Corp., Metrobank, Security Bank and Trust Co., Allied Bank, Bank of Commerce, United Coconut Planters Bank, Asia United Bank, International Exchange Bank and Urban Bank.

"We will have to subpoena the banks to produce the records of these bank accounts to determine whether they are really Estrada's deposits," Desierto said.

The money is being kept under Estrada's name or jointly with his wife, his mistresses and cronies, according to the private prosecutors.

Pimentel said he was inviting Desierto to witness the opening of the envelope.

"So we will not be able to blame that somewhere along the way a *dagdag-bawas* (happened)," said the Senate President, referring to the vote padding and vote shaving scam that cost him a Senate seat in 1995.

Pimentel said a listing would be made of the envelope's contents as well as their description "to make sure that we know what documents we are forwarding to the Ombudsman."

The Office of the Ombudsman requested the Senate in a letter dated Jan. 22 for certified true copies of the second envelope.

Sen. Raul Roco downplayed the opening of the second envelope, saying that it was "largely irrelevant and immaterial."

"(The contents of the envelope) have no probative value now until it is submitted and authenticated," Roco told reporters.

He said the contents would be mere bank records until submitted to "a court with competent jurisdiction in an appropriate case."

Under Desierto's order, the nine banks were required to give a report on bank statements of Estrada's alleged bank assets.

Desierto said there was a need for the opening of the bank accounts because the forfeiture complaint filed by private prosecutors Romeo Capulong, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, among others, and 82 groups on Wednesday was lacking in evidence.

"The complaint for forfeiture only mentions the accounts without citing the exact account numbers. So we have to see the accounts. If the bank cannot provide us with the records, the Special Preliminary Investigation Panel handling the eight charges against Estrada will have to go to the bank," he said.

Desierto said the complaint contained the names of the banks but not the account numbers, except for one.

"That's the one contained in the second envelope. Naturally we will subpoena that from Equitable PCI Bank," he said.

The Ombudsman's order was met with strong resistance from a group identified with Estrada.

At least 50 members of the of People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP) showed up at the Office of the Ombudsman to counter pressures being exerted on Desierto to force him to rule against Estrada.

The PMAP members, led by their president Ronald Lumbao, asked Desierto to give equal treatment to Estrada.

During the dialogue with PMAP leaders at 10:30 a.m., Lumbao reminded Desierto that he should follow constitutional procedures in resolving the charges against Estrada.

Lumbao said Estrada's supporters were wary that the Ombudsman was prejudging the cases.

They also asked Desierto not to rush the preliminary investigation. "Give him (Estrada) a chance to explain his side," Lumbao told Desierto.

"Of course I'm doing what the law says, what is right. We do not take sides here but we will resolve the charges based on evidence at hand," Desierto said.

He said he had given Estrada until Monday to submit his counter affidavit "because that is required by law."

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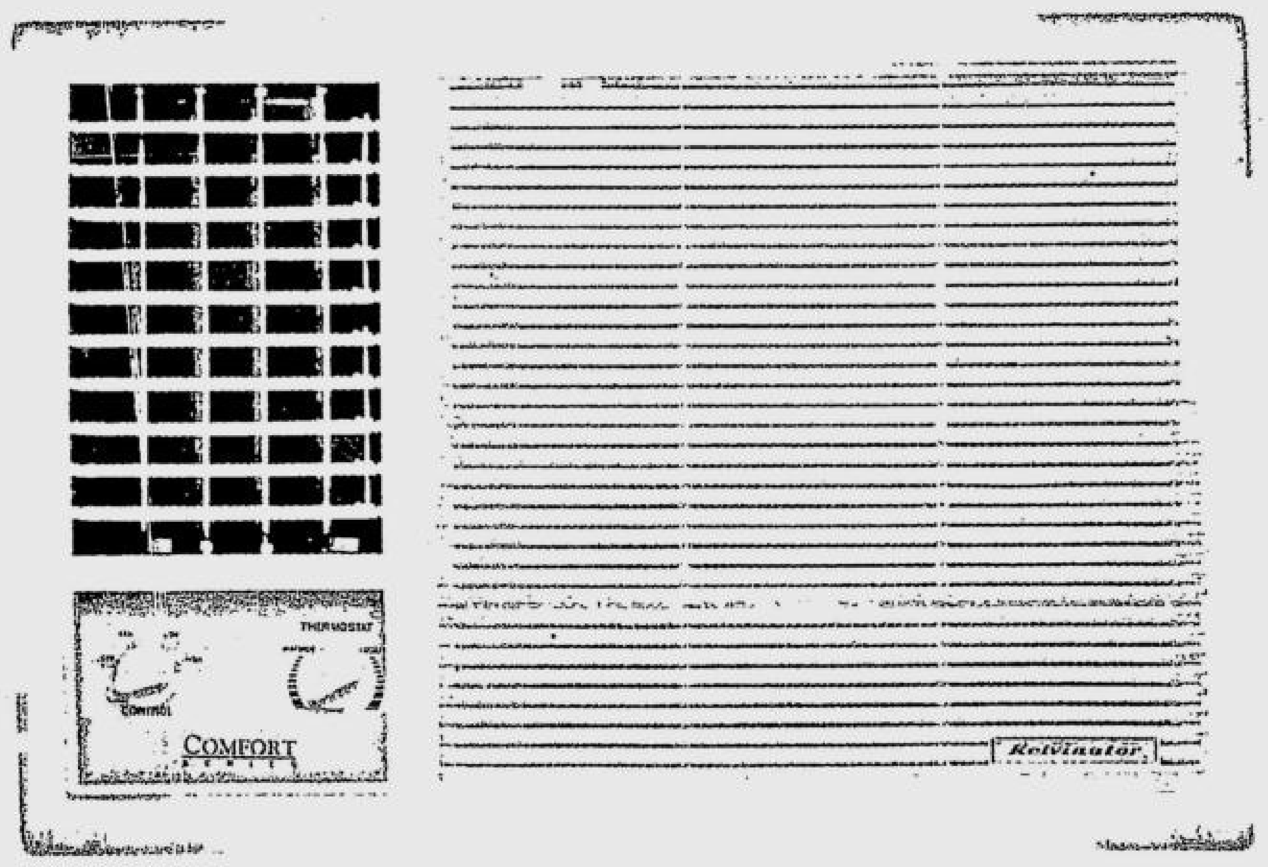

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Vol. 16 No. 63
ISSN 0116-2642

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The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, Philippines • Our new telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments; Editorial Fax 897-4793, 897-4794; Advertising 897-4807; Circulation 527-33-42, 527-33-48, 528-01-83, 528-01-86 and 528-02-13, Fax: 528-02-34.

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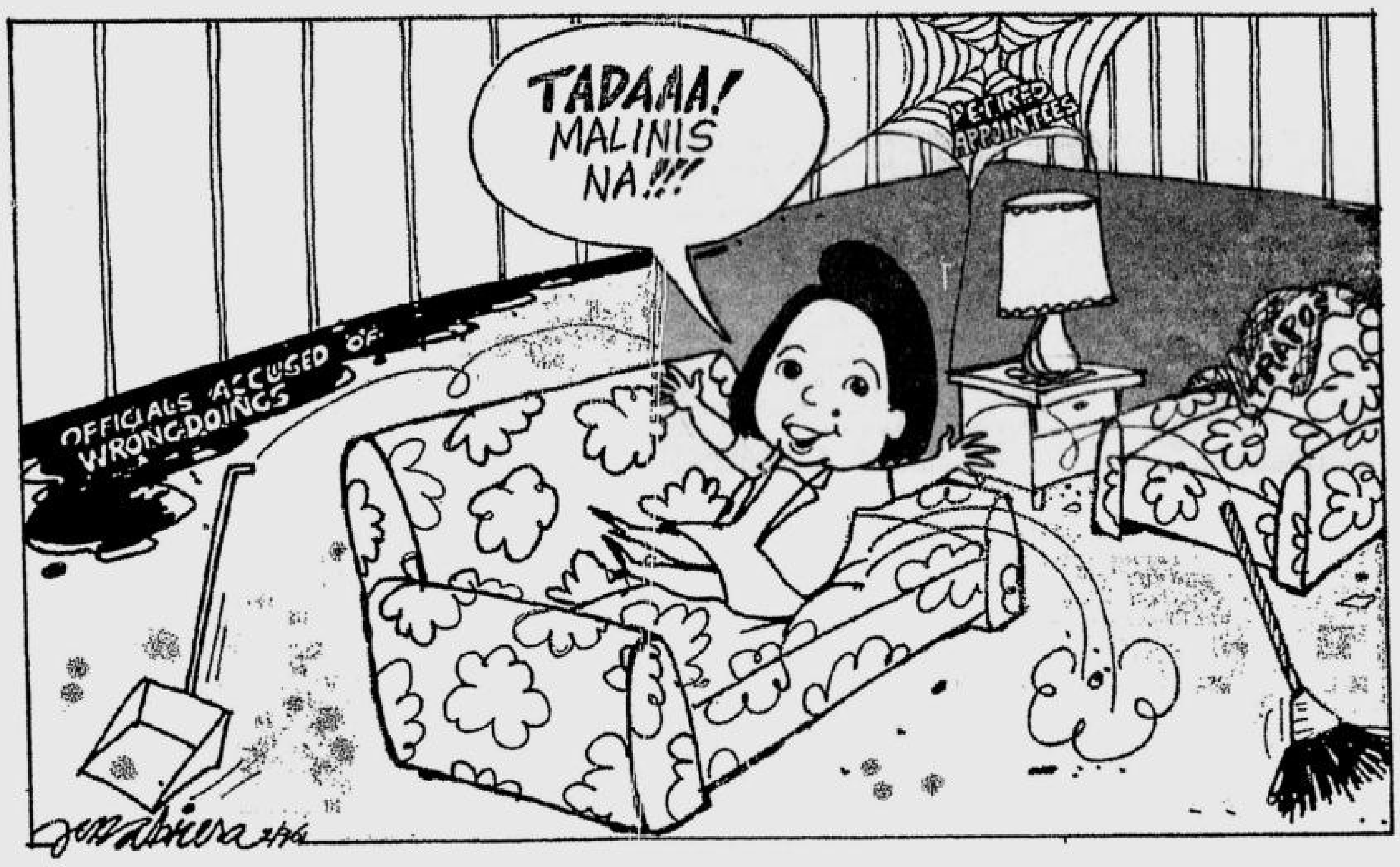


Life after rebellion

EDITORIAL

WHO killed Filemon "Popoy" Lagman, chair of the militant labor group, Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino? The usual suspects in political assassinations have come forward to say, "Don't look at me," followed with suggestions for those who want to find the answer to look in the direction of their favorite enemies.

Jose Maria Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, says one group in the leftist movement was most likely to have carried out Lagman's murder last Tuesday inside the Diliman campus of the University of the Philippines. This is the group Lagman himself was credited for founding: the Alex Boncayao Brigade, which is believed to have pulled off several daring killings of police and military officials right in the urban areas. A faction of the ABB led by Nilo dela Cruz broke away from Lagman allegedly after a bitter dispute over the division of money that Lagman got in connection with the controversial PEA-Amari deal during the Ramos administration. Lagman must have been murdered in revenge by De la Cruz and his group, according to Sison who is now living in exile in the Netherlands.

De la Cruz, of course, denies that his group is responsible for the murder and points to the CPP and the New People's Army, which still recognize Sison as their leader, as the most likely culprit. Lagman led the breakaway from the main body of the revolutionary movement in the mid-1990s when he could not convince the CPP-NPA to shift to urban guerrilla warfare from the Maoist strategy of surrounding the cities from the countryside. That split weakened greatly the CPP-NPA, and this could have made Lagman the enemy No. 1 in the eyes of Sison's faction. De la Cruz pointed out that among the leftist revolutionary groups, only Sison's group has shown the ruthlessness to go after former comrades in arms who went against it. The CPP-NPA is believed to have conducted a bloody purge of its ranks that left dozens of suspected military agents dead in the 1980s.

Police investigators are themselves divided as to who killed Lagman, with some tending to blame leftist groups while others are looking at a right-wing conspiracy to destabilize the new administration of President Macapagal. The chief of the homicide section of the Central Police District, Insp. Rudy Jaraza, was quoted as saying by another newspaper that it was the work of the Sparrow Unit, another name for the ABB. "It's all there," Jaraza said, "the use of a .45-caliber pistol, gunmen on foot, escape using a stolen vehicle, the cool and calculated kill. It is the trademark of the Sparrow Unit." But the acting chief of the Philippine National Police, Deputy Director General Leandro Mendoza, said that one angle they are pursuing is that the killing was done by a "rightist and counter-revolutionary group" that seeks to destabilize the administration.

The theory advanced by Mendoza appears to be the most plausible, especially in the light of a similar incident that happened after the first People Power Revolution in 1986. In November that year, labor leader Rolando Olalia was abducted, tortured and killed. This was followed by the murder of student leader Lean Alejandro, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan. Members of an ultra-rightist group that mounted several attempts to topple the administration of President Aquino were suspected of carrying the killings, but no one was ever arrested for the crimes.

At this point, however, every theory about who killed Lagman belongs to the realm of speculation. But unlike in the Olalia murder, the authorities have witnesses and now even the sketches of the suspects in the Lagman killing. Thus they have fewer excuses for not being able to solve the murder and find the killers.

And the police better act fast to get those killers. An underground group said to be allied with Lagman's BMP, the Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino, has vowed to "exact justice for his assassination in our own way (and) pursue the killers and the masterminds to the ends of the earth." That could lead to another bloodbath in the streets or in the underground movement, depending on whom the PMP holds responsible for the murder. Of course, the military would like nothing better than to see rebel groups get at each other's throat, but that's assuming that Lagman was killed by his leftist foes.

This is the first sensational crime in the very young life of the Macapagal administration. It cannot afford to bungle the solution of this case. This is an acid test of its capability to deal with crime. More than this, the administration has to prove as it seeks to restart peace talks with various dissident organizations that that there is life after rebellion.

Is there racial prejudice in the Philippines?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

TWO interesting news items caught my eye recently. The first was about a group of prominent Makati businessmen singing paeans to newly installed President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The second concerns a group of Chinese-Filipino entrepreneurs who went to Malacañang to pay a courtesy call on the President.

These separate meetings of the President with two of the country's biggest and most influential business groups speak a mouthful about the great divide that until now separates the Makati-based from the Binondo-based businessmen.

For one, the two groups are a study in contrast; members of the elite Makati business groups came in their usual designer clothes and chauffeur-driven cars; the ever-practical and low-key Chinoy businessmen, on the other hand, wore their working barongs and took a tourist bus to go to Malacañang.

Despite differing cultural traits and management styles, it cannot be denied that the two groups have one thing in common: they both wield a great degree of control on the direction and future of the Philippine economy. The Makati-based Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI), for example, pledged support to the new leadership by assuring the Macapagal administration that the FPI's 342 member-firms would not lay off any of its 150,000 workforce. The promise earned the FPI a lot of praise and a huge sigh of relief for its workers.

The Chinoy businessmen members of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry pledged similar support for the Macapagal administration. But instead of praise, what they got was derision and epithets like *balimbing*. All because Lucio Tan and William Gatchalian, both Erap cronies, were with them.

But the federation has hundreds of members. Tan is the president and Gatchalian, a member. Wouldn't it have looked bad had the president of the federation boycotted the courtesy call?

The huge number of workers employed by the FPI is impressive. But I wonder how many workers the Chinese-Filipino businessmen must have under their employ. According to reports, beer and tobacco tycoon Tan alone presides over a conglomerate that employs almost 50,000 workers—nearly a third of the combined workforce of the FPI's 342 member-firms.

It's a pity, then, that Chinoy businessmen like Tan (who claims losing money rather than benefiting from his friendship with Estrada) are unfairly lumped with *balimbing* politicians and ostracized for allegedly "dumping" Estrada in favor of Ms Macapagal. Those who should be closely watched and prosecuted are the likes of Gatchalian, Dante Tan, Lucio Co, Atong Ang and Frank Chua whose names became legend because of their close sinister association with Erap and their inclusion in the Senate impeachment trial.

As for the rest of the Chinoy businessmen, it must be remembered that these entrepreneurs are forced to live and breathe in an environment in which they find themselves. Given the kind of patronage politics and business climate in the Philippines, Chinoy businessmen have no choice but to support whoever is in power. Otherwise, the only option is to "fight city hall"—which is not good for business—or close shop.

Despite their enormous economic success, it's ironic that Chinoys remain outcasts in their adopted country. But such predicament does not speak well of a society like ours which prides itself with democracy, the rule of law and equality among men.

Is there, then, radical prejudice in the Philippines? Radical prejudice here? Heavens, no! There is prejudice against Filipinos in other countries, but prejudice here? Unthinkable.

But if we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that there indeed is racial prejudice here—against the Chinese and Indians, and in favor of the white-skinned Westerners and *mestizos*. We call the Chinese *intsik-bejo* but make the *mestizos* and *mestizas* movie stars. Ironically, it is the latter who look down on their Filipino hosts.

* * *

Mindanaoans cannot now complain that they are not sufficiently represented in the national government. Five of the topmost officials of the executive department, come from Mindanao. President Macapagal claims she came from, besides Pampanga, Iligan City. Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong, Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and Presidential Assistant Paul Dominguez all come from Mindanao. Some people may even claim that Mindanao is overrepresented, having a much smaller population than either Luzon or the Visayas.

But that's the President's way of showing that the development of Mindanao is her priority. Peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front will soon resume. Now, if only the Moro bandits will cooperate and realize that peace in Mindanao will hasten development and will benefit more of their brethren than kidnapping and banditry ever can.

I've said this before and I'll say it again: Mindanao and its many islands are a paradise to Western tourists. It has so many palm-fringed islets with white sand beaches scattered in the emerald seas that Westerners dream of. But of course tourists will not troop there while kidnapping is the most prosperous cottage industry there. But let peace and order reign there and we will beat Bali and Thailand in tourist attractions.

* * *

TODAY's Gloria joke:

When she first stepped into Malacañang Palace, President Macapagal recalled her childhood days there when her father, Diosdado Macapagal, was the President. "I grew up here," she said.

"That's not true," quipped an old member of the Malacañang household staff. "She never grew up."

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Dilimangate

WINDMILLS

Jerry Barican

SOMETIME early in October last year, months after I left government service, my secretary received a telephone call asking for directions to my office. The caller identified herself as the UP student regent, Hannah Serana, and said they had some proposals concerning UP for me. They left their material together with a letter addressed to me.

The letter, dated Oct. 2, 2000, stated that the "Office of the Student Regent Foundation" was about to formally present to President Estrada the plans of the proposed "President Joseph Ejercito Estrada UP Student Hall" prepared by Mohri & P.A. Architects. The letter asked me, as a former student regent, to sponsor the plans and design drawings of the project, which cost P50,000. In return, I was told I would be acknowledged in a "sponsorship tablet" at the finished hall and my "life-sized" student portrait as regent would hang in the gallery.

The letter, on UP letterhead, included a photograph of the then student regent and an apparent relation, identified as BINHI president Jose Ian D. Serana, when she proposed building the hall to then President Estrada on Feb. 15, 2000. I reviewed the detailed sketches and plans the day following her visit and then had them returned. My first reaction was to agree to her proposal for a donation.

UP has always had a place in my heart. I have spent countless hours doing volunteer work for it. In fact the only time I ever went to the President to make a personal request was to ask for the release of P3 million from the President's Social Fund for UP Professorial Chairs. That request was disapproved, and I never made another.

But three things caught my eye. First, I had never heard of this foundation. Second, it was unbelievable that UP students, who are critical of any administration, would actually agree to name their sacred student hall after President Estrada. Third, this "life-sized" portrait business was in very poor taste both aesthetically and ethically. So I told my secretary that I might consider giving a token amount, then on further reflection, decided against doing even that.

All very wisely it turns out because the whole affair is now mired in controversy. As news reports have it, the current student regent has filed graft raps against the former student regent. It appears that out of a much larger sum for the project approved by Malacañang, an initial P15 million had been released.

To date, no work has apparently been done on the project and the money is unaccounted for. Worse, the project was kept secret from the other student leaders and there had been no viewing much less approval of the projects by the various university student councils. It would have been beyond human experience if they had approved these plans, especially naming the place President Estrada Hall.

There are even press reports speculating that the money may have been diverted to purely personal expenses. One of the badges of possible fraud here is that all the members of the board of this foundation are believed to be relatives of the former student regent Serana. It was not until the Presidential Management Staff wrote the current student regent to inquire about the status of the project that the facts were exposed.

This may be a genuine case of fraud. Or it may be a case of good intentions run riot. The money might turn out to be intact or accounted for. The work on the plans by architects and technical people could have been progressing. The foundation could be a simple-minded vehicle for a multi-year project. That still won't explain the lack of transparency, or the stupidity of having Serana's relatives run the store. Indeed, if they were planning to embezzle this money, did they actually think they were going to get away with it?

We need a full and speedy investigation. It would be terrible if an incident like this damaged future gift-giving to the university. The matter needs to be cleared up. And if you have present doubts but wish to give, the best approach would be through the established college foundations or through the UP Foundation, founded by UP itself. You can give directionally, specifying the areas and purposes of your donation. Approach the UP authorities as to how you can put your money to work for UP without red tape. And always ask the right questions. The Diliman Republic, like the one beyond, has its share of visionaries and scoundrels, sometimes one and the same.

* * *

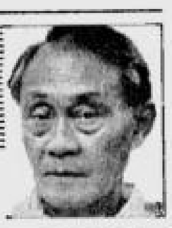
The irascible Conrad de Quiros has mistakenly, if not maliciously, repeated in this space that I played an active role in the ad ban against the INQUIRER during former President Estrada's time in office. That is ridiculous. Since any word of mine would be self-serving, I simply suggest he talk to the editors of this newspaper and the INQUIRER reporters assigned to Malacañang at that time to get their views on this matter.

When I was asked to join this newspaper, I was told that they knew who the parties behind that boycott were and that I was not involved. As I wasn't.

De Quiros' real gripe seems to be I did the best professional job I could as spokesperson and that I worked for a president he hates. Worse, he cannot abide the idea that I now share the same space in this newspaper with him. I would rather not have commented on De Quiros' statements because I don't want this column to turn into a continuing argument with him. But I will make this statement at least once to reject any notion that my silence concedes his points.

Settling the presidency issue

ANALYSIS



Amando Doronila

CONGRESS on Wednesday swiftly, and unanimously, confirmed the nomination of Senate Minority Leader Teofisto Guingona Jr., as Vice President of the Republic. I shall not, in this article, add my own recognition of the credentials of Guingona for the vice presidency. Many others have acknowledged his qualities to deserve that post.

I am addressing two important points about his confirmation. The first is that the nomination took note of the pivotal role of Guingona in opening the way for the impeachment of deposed President Joseph Estrada and the eventual fall of his administration. Guingona's "I Accuse" privilege speech at the Senate on Oct. 5 was one of the defining moments of the last crisis culminating in the ouster of Estrada.

"I Accuse" is not, of course, an original title. It copied the title of Emile Zola's open letter. "J'accuse," denouncing the prejudices and duplicity of French army authorities in the treason trial of Capt. Alfred Dreyfus. Zola's track caught the public's imagination and forced a retrial ultimately leading to Dreyfus' acquittal by a civilian court and the restoration of his army rank. Guingona is certainly not Zola, but his speech had a powerful impact in cracking the armor of Estrada's political invincibility.

Guingona's speech was based on the exposé of Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson on Oct. 4, alleging that President Estrada received millions of pesos in payoffs from *jueteng* and tobacco excise tax. Singson made the exposé in media and his disclosures had a shock effect on Estrada. But Singson's explosive disclosure would have remained a media event if Guingona had not delivered his speech on Oct. 5. Guingona exploded his bombshell when it was considered suicidal to take on Estrada. Guingona fired the shot that opened the Senate blue ribbon committee's investigation into Singson's allegations. Guingona's speech gave the Senate's cognizance of the charges, channeling them into a legislative process that snowballed into the impeachment trial in the Senate.

From that time on, the legislative process took over from the media and the public arena where Singson's charges would have dissipated and remained unsubstantiated.

The second point I would like to make is that Guingona's confirmation reinforces the legitimacy of the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which now faces a legal challenge in the Supreme Court. The swift confirmation came after irascible objections of Estrada die-hard loyalist Rep. Didagen Dilangalen made himself a nuisance by insisting that Ms Macapagal was merely an "acting" President, that Estrada was still the President, and that Congress could not confirm an "illegal" and "unconstitutional" nomination.

The unanimous confirmation by the House cements Congress' earlier reçognition of the new administration's legitimacy when its leaders attended the Jan. 20 inauguration of Ms Macapagal, together with representatives of the legitimizing institutions of the State and Philippine society, including the Supreme Court, the Armed Forces and the police.

The Senate confirmed the nomination, and Estrada's allies—such as Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Miriam Defensor-Santiago and John Osmeña—voted "yes" with reservations, that is they referred to the legal challenge to Ms Macapagal's presidency raised in the Supreme Court by Estrada's lawyers, among them lawyer Rene Saguisag. who is enhancing his reputation as an acrobat rather than as a profound legal mind.

While lawyers play tricks with the language of the law, the basis of their challenge has increasingly been eroded by political reality in which political institutions—like Congress and the Supreme Court—determine legitimacy according to the events on the ground. While in principle the law has to be followed, its interpretation can be elastic and can be made to accommodate the flow of events. Thus, when the Supreme Court approved a resolution authorizing Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., to administer the oath of office to then Vice President Macapagal, the justices did not interpret the Constitution according to narrow construction, but according to their perception of the volatility of events leading to violence and chaos if the moment had not been seized to swear in Ms Macapagal. They harmonized the meaning of the law with political emergencies.

Davide did not swear in an "acting" President. Ms Macapagal, in her letter to the Supreme Court, asking to be sworn in under very explosive conditions where a vacuum of power was developing, did not request she be inducted as "acting'" President. A narrow and restrictive interpretation of the law, under which constitutions are reduced to tombstones in the paradise of the dead, serves as a refuge of dead political causes, such as the political demise of deposed President Estrada. The political life of Estrada cannot be revived by legal gymnastics. The case in the Supreme Court is a forlorn action which faces the tightening ring of legitimacy provided by the abovementioned political institutions that have recognized Ms Macapagal as President without adjectives and qualifications. The return of confidence of the business community in the new administration is an informal expression of legitimacy that reinforces the mandate of the political institutions.

When Senators Enrile, et al., voted for confirmation of Guingona, they did not seem to be aware that even if their "yes" vote was qualified, they already invested a mandate of legitimacy to Ms Macapagal's administration, albeit on a de facto basis. They have, in fact, eroded their own position, and it will not be long before their reservations will wilt in the vine. The final act will be the Supreme Court's resolution of the legal issues raised by the rear-guard action of Estrada's loyalists.

Comelec, Namfrel and the May polls

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HERE'S food for thought for Rene Saguisag, as well as for the Fortun brothers and their colleagues in the fallen President Erap's defense team, namely Estelito Mendoza, Andres Narvasa, Raul Daza, Jose Flaminiano and Cleofe Verzola. I cite Saguisag and the Fortuns particularly because in the last few days they've insisted in media interviews that their taking on the discredited President as a client was simply in line with the legal dictum that everyone, even someone who is clearly guilty, is entitled to the best defense possible.

From a letter written to The Wall Street Journal and excerpted by the Reader's Digest, this rejoinder from Ross Baker: "It is evident that most lawyers and legal scholars feel that their ethical obligation to put forth their best defense of a client is the highest principle in law. Agreed, it is a high principle. However, should it be a higher principle than what the system is supposed to achieve—namely, justice? Of course not. If the ethic of a good defense insists on obscuring or hiding truth, it needs to be reevaluated, because it is then immoral."

* * *

THINGS aren't looking too good for the coming elections in May. First is the delay in the approval of the national budget, including the Comelec's budget. While the other government departments could function on last year's budget, the Comelec faces a disaster because last year's budget did not include provisions for the elections. How can the country hold elections without ballots, booths and the money to pay for the services of public school teachers and other poll personnel?

As if that weren't bad enough, the Comelec is at the moment rudderless with the retirement of former Chair Harriet Demetriou and two commissioners. President Macapagal has so far not yet named replacements for the three, allegedly because she's waiting for Congress to go on recess before naming her appointees.

In the meantime, the Comelec is caught in a word war with officers of Namfrel, the citizens' electoral watchdog. The Namfrel once again applied for accreditation with the Comelec last October but it was only on the third week of January when the Comelec, in a 5-2 *en banc* decision, chose to accredit Namfrel as its "citizens' arm," but not to conduct an "Operation Quick Count."

The majority decision was supposed to be written by Commissioner Luz Tancangco, a longtime critic of Namfrel, but that decision has yet to be released, preventing Namfrel from preparing its formal response to the Comelec.

The latest news is that the Comelec *en banc* has decided that Tancangco will no longer be required to write the majority decision, but a simple "position paper" instead. Namfrel will then be asked to respond to the paper in time for a hearing on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day.

* * *

WHY is Tancangco so dead-set against Namfrel's Operation Quick Count? She bases her objections on a study she conducted of Namfrel's count during the 1987 elections, released in 1991, where she alleged discrepancies or adjustments at various levels, a "highly improbable" fill-up rate for the ballots, and a partial count that had higher totals than the Comelec's final count.

I've listened to Tancangco argue her side on radio and TV, but what she always neglects to mention is that shortly after her study, based on the skimpy sample of 14 precincts (out of 100,000), was released, a panel of colleagues in the UP slammed both its methodology and conclusions.

Jose Encarnacion, then the dean of the UP School of Economics, said "Much of the discussion in this paper strikes me as just funny (because the reasoning is so queer), and since it is not meant to be a humorous piece but a serious academic study, I have to conclude that this paper is simply an incompetent treatment of the subject."

Dr. Cynthia Bautista, now the director of the Center for Integrative Development Studies, wrote that "What is bothersome about the report is the extent with which it estimates the fraud to be at least two million...The two million votes arrived at by computing the total discrepancy in the 14 precincts and multiplying this by the 100,000 precincts all over the country is based on basic assumptions about how people voted in the past."

Mahar Mangahas, president of Social Weather Stations, observed that "For the number of persons who voted to be greater than the number of votes cast for House (of) Representatives is not a numerical anomaly in the first place, but (Tancangco) refuses to accept this point..." He likewise cited Tancangco's "tendency to leap to sensationalistic statements across chasms of inconclusive evidence."

* * *

AFTER BEING brought up short by respected figures in the same university where she taught, one would think Tancangco would at least have felt humbled and chastised. But no, all she had to say afterwards was: "My methodology may have been faulty, but I stand by my conclusions."

While many in UP were calling for her sacking because of her blatant violations of academic standards and ethics, her home college chose to send her abroad instead for "further studies." A protégé of then UP College of Public Administration Dean Raul de Guzman, who is of course the brother-in-law of ex-President Erap and chair of the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation, she was coddled and protected upon her return and until her appointment to the Comelec. Once in the poll body, Tancangco commenced to wreak havoc, starting with the scandalous decision on the party-list elections (a decision subsequently slapped down by the Supreme Court) and following that by refusing to act on the computerization program, which by law was supposed to be implemented in full this year, and now her word war with Namfrel.

So is Tancangco's vehement stance against Namfrel truly the fruit of judicious and considered study, or the mere vendetta of a woman scorned for being shown up to be the flawed scholar and thinker that she is?

In search of Filipiniana

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

A DECADE ago Filipiniana, both current and rare, was relatively easy to find. There were very few collectors and readers. Print-runs for current books were small, from 500 to 1,000 copies per title, and publishers were not in the habit of reprinting Filipiniana aside from textbooks that were needed every year. The situation was so bleak that a non-textbook that sold a thousand copies in a year was considered a runaway bestseller..With limited copies available and about 400 public and private libraries around the country, Filipiniana was out of print after a year and rare two to three years after its initial release. To complicate matters further, many books were printed on cheap acidic paper that would not survive 20 years' use. I am surprised in libraries abroad that they will sometimes allow photocopying of 17th-century Filipiniana printed on grade-A paper while some books of the 1950s and 1960s are so brittle they are taken out of general circulation.

Things have changed in the past decade, the centennial years marked a boom in Philippine publishing. What was once a small "Filipiniana" shelf in bookstores has expanded into book dealers that specialize in Filipiniana like the Filipino Bookstore and Old Manila/Heritage Books. I look back on those early days of Filipiniana collecting, when I would spend whole Saturdays hiking both sides of the Recto and Rizal Avenues' second-hand bookstores in search of Filipiniana. Gilda Cordero Fernando (who single-handedly created the trend in coffee-table books) once advised me to buy two copies of every Filipiniana title so that in time I could sell the duplicates and keep one copy for my use. When I complained that I hardly had money for one, let alone, two copies of every Filipiniana title, she suggested that I interest my father in investing in the second copy. I did not realize then that one could be a speculative buyer outside of stocks, foreign currencies and real estate.

One person who dared was Mario Alcantara who runs the chain of Old Manila or Heritage book shops in Manila. I met him in the early 1980s when I was a college freshman. Artists and writers would frequent his gallery to play chess or exchange gossip and jokes with his wife Odette. I needed a quiet place to read and do my homework. There was a lot of room in that rambling 27-room house on Lantana Street, Cubao that used to be the Philippine Art Gallery run by Lyd Arguilla.

From a window on the balcony I claimed as my own, I watched Alcantara haggle with scavengers pushing heaping *karitons* of books, junk and trash. Books were unloaded on Lantana Road, shared with an auto repair shop, and these were dumped, without classification, cataloging, or pricing in any vacant spot available throughout the gallery. Thus, once a week, I would pick out books, gather a pile and ask for the price. Alcantara would smile and say, "pay what you think is right." With my limited allowance he even accepted meager installments! This was obviously a good deal, though in retrospect I gave free book appraisal service.

Some years later, Alcantara brought me into one of the rooms neatly arranged with books and confessed, "ever since you started buying from me, I told my staff to note down each book you bought. The price you paid was recorded and another copy was found and kept here. We did quite well, and I am proud to show you the shadow of your Filipiniana library." Alcantara was a business genius. Today, he knows what books are valuable from the ones fit to be recycled into toilet paper. Old Manila/Heritage is the leading bookstore for rare and out of print Filipiniana. They not only supply local buyers but also provide a search service for university libraries abroad. While it is more comfortable to visit Old Manila/Heritage book shops in the malls, there is no substitute for actual diving into a pile of books. In one of the side streets near Camp Crame is Mr. Alcantara's lair. After his Lantana outfit burned down, over a decade ago, he has recreated another building with a maze of rooms filled with paintings, books, tektites, etc. This is one place where you can prove that one man's garbage is another man's treasure. An annex to this place I call the Cave of Ali Baba, is filled with books for those in search of the proverbial needle in the haystack. Real bibliophiles come here in shorts, carrying wet towels, extra clothes and, like me, a supply of anti-histamines to counter the dust that comes with old books.

The real thrill of collecting Filipiniana is in the chase. Looking for a book, finding it, trying to get the owner or dealer to sell it, and haggling to a price you are comfortable with. Each book in my library has a story especially if it was purchased from legendary book dealers like the late Mar C. Sanchez of Caloocan who fed me *pancit* and gave me a discount for taking his blood pressure. Or the eccentric Pedro B. Ayuda whose shop along Morayta was his business office—he was the president of the "Philippine Bar Flunkers Association." They say the love of books is a gentle madness. Looking at my shelves today I realize the effort that went into building the library and the effort needed to read every book I own.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Ka Popoy Lagman: People Power visionary

OUTLOOK

Rigoberto Tiglao

YES, he was. Although we're sure both the middle-class civil society crowd and the orthodox Left led by Jose Ma. Sison would scoff at the idea. Derided as a Mafia-like union boss by big businesses, an urban terrorist by the military, and later as a capitulationist by mainstream communists, Filemon "Popoy" Lagman actually had been pushing for what we would later on call "People Power" as early as the late 1970s.

It was on April 1978 that Lagman and the Communist Party of the Philippines' Manila-Rizal Committee he headed spearheaded what really was the prototype for the first People Power in 1986. That was the metropolitan-wide "noise barrage" against the dictatorship. On the eve of the Batasan Pambansa elections, thousands of Manila residents stepped outside their houses banging pots and pans as motorists honked their horns to first shout that now classic protest-cry: "*Tama na, sobra na* (Enough of the Marcos dictatorship)!"

Not only that. Lagman led his metropolitan party organization to a tack preposterously "bourgeois" then for communists, but which now is becoming an accepted practice, even a required one for political struggles of the Left. This is participation in the elections and the forging of alliances with non-communist organizations. Lagman pushed for the Left's participation in the 1978 Batasan Pambansa elections, and its setting up of alliances with non-communist groups.

Lagman however defied the Communist Party's official policy of non-participation in the "bourgeois elections." For that, he was pulled out of his post as leader of the metropolitan party organization and assigned as an unarmed rural organizer. His first wife Dodi Garduce was dispatched elsewhere.

It was that episode which created in Lagman that deep anger which almost always shows when one talks to him. "We were sent out really to be slaughtered," he once told me. "We were told to organize peasants, but given only this old *paltik* (a homemade gun) for our defense." His wife Dodi was killed in an ambush by the military in a Central Luzon area that had little NPA presence.

As a communist leader though, Lagman formulated his idea for a People Power revolt within Marxist historiography. That is, he argued that the model for Philippine revolution couldn't be the rural-based Maoist "protracted war." It should rather be the urban-based Russian Revolution, both its 1905 and 1917 phases.

People out in the streets in the nation's capital led by a core of political activists, calling for an unwanted leader to step down. The military then defecting to join them. That was the Russian Revolution. That was also People Power I and People Power II.

It wasn't something Lagman just thought of by poring over Leninist tracts. For most of his revolutionary career, he was head of the Communist Party's Manila-Rizal Committee in charge of the insurgents' metropolitan organization.

He realized that the locus of political power in the country had moved since the 1950s from rural fiefdoms to metropolitan Manila. Even the bulk of the poor was no longer in rural areas but in urban centers. His assignment to the countryside under "disciplinary action" made him realize that the country didn't have the vast, isolated hinterlands China had where a Red Army could be raised, and a Red Base established.

For Lagman though, it wasn't just a vague or general, "People Power." He saw it as "Worker Power," which meant that the Left's organizing work should be in the factories. After all, sons of peasants had moved from the countrysides to escape poverty into the urban areas, to fall into a different type of impoverishment. They also had the most stake in a better government, and they had the numbers for an urban uprising.

The strength of unions now owes a lot to Lagman, and his urban guerrilla group, the Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB). The ABB may have been a ruthless hit squad, and it deteriorated in the 1990s as a kidnap-for-ransom gang.

It was originally organized though as a union's self-defense unit. Under Lagman, it "leveled the playing field" for unions. Sweatshop owners and unscrupulous big businessmen in Manila for decades had routinely hired goons and even policemen to stop workers' unions. It was the ABB which became the counterforce against them.

Lagman missed out on the first People Power, as he had to follow the policy of the communist hierarchy to dissociate from the Cory-led opposition. That was the last straw for him. After debating unsuccessfully since 1986 with the communist leadership, urging it to change the party's tack toward what we now call a "People Power" model of revolt, he broke away from the Communist Party in 1991.

This time around though, he was deeply involved in the second People Power. He had only two weeks to celebrate that victory.

Many at the second People Power were simple citizens outraged by Estrada's corruption. However, a big part of the militant core of People Power II, especially at its early stages, were from the Left—whose evolution in the past few years Lagman had a big role in.

De Villa's story

Former Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara was afraid that deposed President Joseph Estrada would commit suicide in the wee hours of the morning of Jan. 20 instead of resigning that morning, according to the new executive secretary, Rene de Villa who was with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's negotiating panel at that time.

In our interview with De Villa, the executive secretary denied Angara's account that Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes ever committed to Estrada that he will be given five days from Jan. 19 to resign. "That was what Estrada asked Angie (Reyes)," De Villa said. "All Angie said was that he will 'do his best' to get that agreement," according to De Villa.

The executive secretary also explained that after talks with Angara, the agreement was for Estrada to submit his letter of resignation on the morning of Jan. 20, but then he would be allowed to stay in Malacañang until Wednesday to pack up his personal things. De Villa however emphasized that the agreement was for the Macapagal transition team to immediately move into Malacañang for an orderly transfer of power.

"But then God intervened," De Villa said. "The Supreme Court agreed the following morning to (administer) Gloria's oath of office as President."

De Villa in the interview relates other details on the negotiations with Estrada, his views on the controversial appointments of retired Gen. Lisandro Abadia and Police Chief Leandro Mendoza, on Macapagal's working style and priorities, on his role in the new administration.

Get more details of the interview at today's edition of www.inq7.net.

* * *

Comments: rtiglao@inq7.net

THEY SAID

Garbage and democracy

"Democratically managed waste management programs will put the garbage crisis into the dustbin of history."

—Von Hernandez of Greenpeace Southeast Asia

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The crime of letting Erap go

THERE she goes again. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was in her typical non-committal mode when she declared it is Estrada's "call" whether to go on exile while saying in the same breath that her administration will pursue the plunder cases.

Executive Secretary Rene de Villa is the perfect match for the petite, wishy-washy President.

But reading between the lines, Ms Macapagal is clearly amenable to Erap's escape from justice. It is Ms Macapagal's opening for the flight from punishment of Erap and. his cabal of cronies. If she finally allows Erap to leave, it is her first sin against the people.

Ms Macapagal has her "it is his call" as Cory Aquino had her "keeping my options open." It is simply double-talk from the two alleged heroines of Edsa I and II.

The least that the main beneficiary of Edsa II could do is to listen well to the people's will. And that is to apply the full force of the law and the hand of iron justice on the pillagers of the nation. She should leave no quarters for vacillation. She should leave no stone unturned to deliver justice and closure to the people.

In her inaugural address, she evaded answering the question by saying she will let "justice take its course." Now she declares that "it is Erap's call" if he will go into self-exile.

We call on those who promised vigilance on President Macapagal not to let this scam be consummated.—**WILSON FORTALEZA, national president, Sanlakas, 252 Unit 1, Lava Townhomes, Commonwealth cor. Calderon Streets, Old Balara, Quezon City**

LETTERS

Protest over Subic's dolphin program

IN A LETTER dated Jan. 18, 2001, Hollywood producers Richard Donner and Lauren Shuler-Donner, producers of the "Free Willy" movies, expressed dismay over the planned swim with the dolphins program in Subic Bay, Philippines.

The Donners are not in favor of any kind of captivity or confinement of dolphins. They called such capture and confinement of dolphins as "outrageous" and "inhumane." The Donners note that all tuna companies in the Philippines abide by the strictest standards of dolphin-safe tuna nets and yet the Philippine government would allow for the capture of whales and dolphins for the swim with the dolphins program.

The Hollywood producers also warned that they will inform all their networks, including schools and other organizations of the situation in the Philippines. Should the Philippines continue with the program, the Donners warn that they would campaign for their friends and contacts not to patronize the Philippines as a tourist destination. Furthermore, the said producers warn that they will be forced to forgo the Philippines as a location for any future films.—**TRIXIE CONCEPCION, national coordinator, Earth Island Institute (Phils.), 132B Matahimik St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City**

Quoted on something he never said

I WRITE to comment on another letter by Erick San Juan which makes reference to an article by Alejandro Lichauco ("GMA has laid basis for constitutional coup?") which must have appeared in an earlier edition of the paper. The Lichauco article appears premised on statements attributed to me by Jesus G. Sison of Malaya. Over the course of the article, Lichauco points out that I may have been misquoted but nonetheless continues to quote me to support his point. He even uses quotes further to arrive at patently wrong conclusions such as suggesting that the moves to oust Estrada was a "Makati-based project." He even goes far as to ask whether People Power II was a "coup to deliver the nation to a few hundred powerful individuals that make up the Makati Business Club."

The fact is, I have not spoken to Sison (the original source of Lichauco) or have I ever met him or Lichauco although I have been liberally quoted, it seems, by both. I am afraid that San Juan may have based his letter on something which never occurred.

I hope this sets the record straight.—**GUILLERMO M. LUZ, executive director, Makati Business Club, 2/F Acceed Conference Center, Ayala Corporation Hall, Benavidez corner Trasierra Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City**

Rediscovered country

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S something else I discovered over the last several months, along with the virtual global Filipino community—and its more colorful cousin, the "texting community," which helped to spark People Power II. That is AM radio.

The first is a more recent phenomenon, which probably dates back to only three or four years ago, when the e-mail or Internet technology really kicked in and allowed Filipinos abroad to touch base with and form a true community with their compatriots in the Philippines. The second is a very old phenomenon, but which I—and I suspect many other Filipinos—have only (re)discovered recently. The first resonates with the thoughtful and intensely patriotic concerns of the Filipino middle class, albeit dispersed around the world. The second blares with the joyous cries and grief-stricken sobs of the *masa* from deep within the heartland.

I rediscovered AM radio only last November. I hadn't been listening to the radio much in recent years, preferring to listen to CDs which, quite incidentally, now threaten to overrun my home as a result also of the digital revolution. Don't worry, though I believe in shareware (I do not mind that people reprint and pass my columns around), I am a principled pirate and do not apply my CD Writer to local music. But that is another story. To go back: I hadn't been listening to the radio much, except in the car, and largely to FM radio. And largely to dzFE, which helps to soothe the truly savage beast that leaps out in me when I am confronted by traffic.

But all that changed last November. Like most Filipinos, I got hooked to the new "Rosalinda," or the far more popular, and longer-lasting drama, which was the impeachment trial. On those occasions when I was on the road between the hours of 2 p. m. and 8 p.m., I would switch on the radio and scan the airwaves for coverage of the trial. FM radio was no good: Only one station—it was somewhere to the far right—carried the trial, and its broadcast was constantly interrupted by ads and commentary at the wrong places. It was very disconcerting, particularly when an important witness was giving testimony, or was being cross-examined. That led me to the path of AM radio, and thence to discover a world that lay beyond the yellow brick road.

To say that AM radio is very different from FM radio is to say that Divisoria is very different from the Rockwell Center. Those are not just two different frequency modes, those are two different modes of life. Those are not just two different bandwidths, those are two different worlds. The difference between FM and AM is the difference between McDonald's hamburger and Mang Donald's "hamburdyer." It is the difference between a mountain bike and a "pedicab." It is the difference between Kuh Ledesma and Lolit Carbon. It is the difference between a wheelbarrow and a *kareton*. It is the difference between the SM Sale Club and a *sari-sari* store. It is the difference between a bistro and a *turo-turo*. It is the difference between pasta and *pancit*. It is the difference between the home along the *riles*, and the home along the ridges. It is the difference between *barako* and Star Bucks. It is the difference between Madame Auring and Madame Butterfly. It is the difference between heaven and earth. It is the difference between life and death.

My forays into AM radio led me farther afield than the impeachment trial. In the course of it, I discovered the many indiscreet charms of the toiling (or jobless) classes, as shown by AM's richly, or gaudily, varied programs. Almost immediately, I confirmed something a friend of mind in broadcast told me years ago: "You'll be surprised, but the demand for news isn't coming from the A and B, it's coming from the C and D. It's the C and D that can't seem to have enough of it: They need news like a fix." The news of course is pretty much the kind that comes out in tabloids, crime and entertainment, personal confessions and oddities, salacious gossip and even more salacious commentary, tumbling out like the Great Flood. But it's news nonetheless. Someone's *tsismis* is another person's bulletin.

And that's only the start, the things that greet you at the entrance gate. Since I started listening to AM, which is every time I get into my car, I've come across the following fare: A program catering to the OFWs ((it offers free calls to people with kin working in the Middle East and elsewhere), a program catering to Visayans (Visayans in Metro Manila get to greet their folk back home, or vice versa), several programs offering medical advice, several programs offering legal advice, several musical programs or amateur hours (one had somebody singing really old Tagalog songs, accompanied by a guitar that sounded like—well, you could imagine the calluses in the fingers of the guitarist from pressing on metal strings on a hard fretboard) a host of programs offering advice to the lovelorn or lonely (some cater to the young, others cater to older folk; the advice ranges from the sympathetic to the silly), and an even bigger host of religious programs, particularly in the wee hours and on Sundays.

And everywhere commentaries of all hues, shapes, sizes, persuasions, ideologies, philosophies, intuitions, biases, sellouts, delivered with various degrees of wit and wisdom. I don't know how much of JimPol's millions continue to influence commentators on AM radio today—probably less so now that Erap is out, if at all those millions still flow—but I do notice many of the commentators remain scornful of Gloria. For how long, I do not know. That, unfortunately, is the downside of AM: the capacity of many commentators there to, let us just say, discover Filipino heroes, the kind that appears on bills.

I've said before that even before we talk of educating the masses to make them more responsive to the demands of being true citizens, we should talk of educating ourselves about the masses, to make us more responsive to ***their*** demands. Or since they rarely demand anything, other than not being abused too much by their employers or hassled by cops, other than to be left alone to dedicate a song by April Boy to their kin in Saudi, their concerns and preoccupations, their aspirations and regurgitations, their hopes and dreams. Right now, I can't think of a better source of education in that respect than AM radio.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0342, Series of 2001

The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

SHARON

Sharon forms coalition gov't

JERUSALEM—Grim Palestinian leaders grudgingly accepted the election of hawkish Ariel Sharon as Israel's prime minister and urged resumption of peace talks from the point where they stopped, but some called for continued struggle as Sharon laid out tough guidelines for resuming negotiations.

While demanding a halt to violence and disowning concessions proposed by Prime Minister Ehud Barak, trounced in Tuesday's election, Sharon aides showed glimmers of flexibility toward the Palestinians, as Sharon made his first moves to form a coalition government.

Sharon appointed a negotiating team to meet with the myriad parties in Israel's fractious parliament. He hoped for a broad-based government including Barak's Labor party, but appeared assured only of a small majority in parliament among hawkish and Orthodox Jewish factions.

Meanwhile, Palestinan leaders considered the new situation. After a four-hour meeting late Wednesday, the Palestinian Cabinet issued a statement saying that Sharon's election is an "internal Israeli matter" and called on Sharon to resume peace negotiations from the point where they left off under Barak's regime.

But Sharon aides said there was no chance of that. Adviser Raanan Gissin said Sharon would be bound only by signed agreements, not by proposals made by his predecessor. Another aide, Eyal Arad, said Sharon was determined not to renew negotiations until all Palestinian violence stops.

Barak offered the Palestinians a state in about 95 percent of the West Bank and control over parts of Jerusalem, indicating his willingness to partially relinquish Israeli sovereignty over a disputed hilltop in the Old City of Jerusalem, where the Al Aqsa Mosque compound was built above the ruins of the biblical Jewish Temples, a site sacred to Muslims and Jews and claimed by both.

The Palestinians turned down Barak's proposals, and Israeli voters repudiated them by turning Barak out of office by a huge margin, 62.5 percent to 37.4 percent.

Sharon's aides said the Barak ideas are off the table. Demonstrating his resolve to change the nature of the Israel-Palestinian relationship, Sharon visited the Western Wall, sacred to Jews as the retaining wall of the disputed hilltop holy site. He declared that all of Jerusalem would remain united under Israeli rule, "with the Temple Mount at its center for all eternity," using the Jewish name for the site.

Sharon's Sept. 28 visit to the hilltop to demonstrate Israeli sovereignty set off the current wave of Palestinian unrest. Since then, 385 people have been killed in clashes and attacks, including 323 Palestinians, 13 Israeli Arabs, 48 other Israelis and one German doctor. *AP*

Anger rages on Okinawa over top US exec remarks

NAHA, Japan—Anger continued to grow on Japan's southern island of Okinawa Thursday over allegations the top US Marine general here called local leaders "a bunch of wimps."

Hoping to ease tensions, Lt. Gen. Earl Hailston was scheduled to meet with Okinawa Gov. Keiichi Inamine and Okinawa Prefectural Assembly Speaker Takayasu Ito later in the day.

Kiyoshi Yamazato, a spokesperson for Okinawa Prefecture (State), said Hailston was scheduled to meet with the two leaders "for about 10 or 15 minutes" on Thursday afternoon.

Hailston has been under fire since a major newspaper here reported that in an e-mail to his staff on Jan. 23 he expressed frustration with Okinawan leaders' failure to stand up to base opponents.

"I think they are all nuts and a bunch of wimps," the paper quoted him as writing in the e-mail.

The report prompted municipal lawmakers in one city near Marine bases on the island to unanimously pass a resolution calling for Hailston's resignation. It was the first time a local government on Okinawa, home to the largest part of American forces stationed in Japan, has called for a senior US military officer to be removed from his post.

US military officials have refused to confirm the content of the e-mail, saying it was intended as a private communication. But Hailston later apologized for the "misunderstanding" caused by his choice of words, insisting he had only respect and admiration for local Japanese officials.

"If my remarks in the e-mail are construed as suggesting anything else, then I am deeply sorry and apologize for the misunderstanding," he said in a statement.

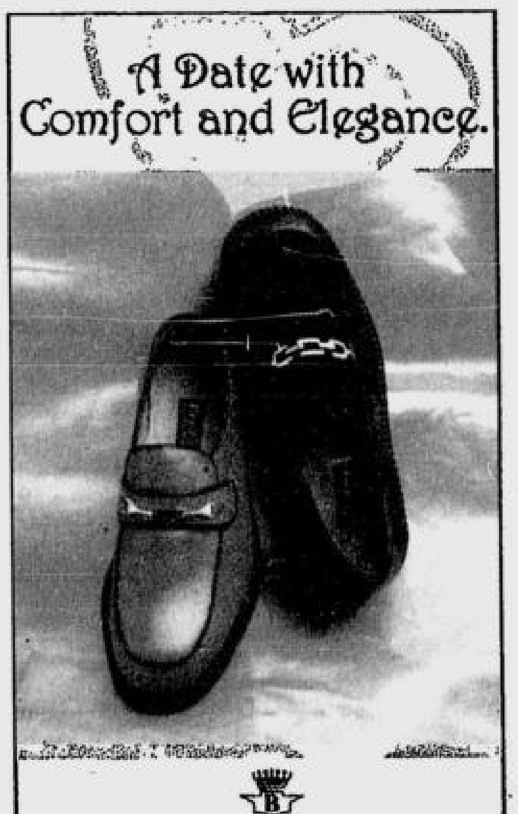
That apology may not be enough for Okinawans, who have a long list of complaints against the US forces posted on the island.

The story dominated the front-pages of newspapers here Thursday, and was also given prominent coverage in national newspapers and on television networks.

Military-related crime is a major concern here.

In Hailston's e-mail, he reportedly urged his staff to crack down on any military personnel breaking Japanese laws after an Okinawan court last month fined a U.S. Marine for lifting a high school girl's skirt and snapping photos.

Under a mutual security treaty between Japan and the United States, about 47,000 U.S. military service people are stationed in Japan. Nearly two-thirds of them are on Okinawa Island, 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) southwest of Tokyo. *AP*



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ATLANTIS ON MISSION REUTERS

Onlookers in the media site view the launch of the space shuttle Atlantis on Mission STS-98 to the International Space Station from Cape Canaveral, Feb. 7. A shadow from the contrail points to the rising moon in the lower right of the picture. Atlantis carried a crew of five on a mission to deploy the Destiny science module to the space station.

Cops disperse pro-Wahid protest

JAKARTA—For a second consecutive day, police fired warning shots to disperse a protest by thousands of supporters of embattled Indonesia's President Abdurrahman Wahid yesterday.

Police in the town of Lamongan said a mob of about 10,000 tried to attack a local office of the rival Golkar Party, that used to support former dictator Suharto and is now backing moves to impeach Wahid for alleged corruption.

There were no reports of injuries in the town about 550 km east of Jakarta.

Wahid plans to visit East Java today in a bid to calm the situation there, his spokesperson said. The region is home province and the heartland of his political party.

"The president will meet his supporters to bring the situation back to normal," presidential spokesperson Wimar Witoelar said after a Cabinet meeting.

Thousands of pro-Wahid protesters also marched through the ancient city of Yogyakarta, 400 km east of Jakarta.

Witnesses said many in that crowd also had threatened the city's Golkar office.

On Wednesday, police fired tear gas and warning shots against a massive pro-Wahid crowd that burned a Golkar office in the East Java capital, Surabaya.

Other Golkar offices have also been attacked in the region, which is Wahid's political heartland.

Wahid has called for calm, but on Wednesday described the attacks as "understandable" and a reflection of popular anger against the actions of the legislature.

Thursday's Cabinet meeting was convened at the state palace in Jakarta amid signs that Wahid's coalition government is feeling the strain of the ongoing political crisis.

On Wednesday Wahid dismissed Justice Minister Yusril Mahendra for suggesting publicly that he quit.

Wahid has refused to step down despite mounting pressure after the parliament last week censured him over two corruption scandals and opened the door to his possible impeachment, which could take at least four months.

However, attempts by some lawmakers to speed up the process against Wahid have floundered with major parties and the military insisting that any impeachment process be carried in strict accordance with the constitution.

Wahid, who 15 months ago became Indonesia's first democratically elected head of state in more than 40 years, has denied any wrongdoing in the affairs. *AP*

Man with gun shot outside White House

WASHINGTON—A middle-aged accountant with a history of mental illness fired several shots outside the White House and then was shot by the Secret Service as he waved his handgun menacingly, authorities said. The tense, noontime standoff sent tourists running for cover.

The drama unfolded Wednesday just outside the fence at the edge of the South Lawn, 200 meters from the building where President George W. Bush was inside exercising.

The man, wounded in the knee and hospitalized under guard, was identified by law enforcement sources as Robert W. Pickett, 47, from Evansville, Indiana, about 450 km south of Chicago.

He had been fired by the Internal Revenue Service in the mid 1980s, and neighbors said he kept to himself, resented the tax collection agency and was obsessed with West Point, the US military academy, where he had dropped out after a semester in 1972.

Pickett had acknowledged in court records suffering from mental illness and trying to commit suicide.

Bush, working out in the White House residence, was alerted by Secret Service agents "but understood that he was not in any danger," spokesperson Ari Fleischer said. First lady Laura Bush was in Texas. Vice President Dick Cheney was working in his White House office.

The shooting was the latest in a string of security scares that have brought tighter protection for US presidents. In 1995, then-President Bill Clinton ordered Pennsylvania Avenue closed in front of the White House following the Oklahoma City bombing. Earlier that year, a man was shot on the White House lawn after scaling a fence with an unloaded gun.

The latest incident, on a sunny, springlike day, triggered a tight security clampdown. Tourists were evacuated from White House rooms, and police in riot gear took up positions around the executive mansion and beyond its gates.

The confrontation occurred on E Street where tourists gather along the White House fence to snap photos of the executive mansion and hope for a glimpse of Bush jogging on the track encircling the South Lawn. There is an unobstructed view from the fence to the mansion.

Secret Service officers on patrol in a car "heard shots fired and proceeded to surround a subject who was wielding a weapon, a gun," White House spokesperson Fleischer said. A 10-minute standoff ensued in which witnesses said they heard officers try to persuade the man to put the gun down. *AP*

manifesto
The Sulongbayan Movement Foundation

WHEREAS, once again, by the grace of Almighty God and the inspired collective will and act of the Filipino people, the miracle of People Power took place to demolish a perniciously corrupt and morally bankrupt regime at almost the same spot where the epiphany of Filipino People Power first occurred fifteen years earlier;

WHEREAS, once again, the rare opportunity presents itself to the Filipino people to transform People Power into a lasting and dynamic force that will change their lives for the better, particularly the lives of our impoverished masses;

WHEREAS, it is high time we started remolding our existing socio-political culture, a culture that is characterized by patronage of the worst stripe and partisan politics of the most virulent kind, *a damaged culture that is the root cause of most if not all of our national ills;*

WHEREAS, we believe, along with perceptive political thinkers including the principal players of EDSA People Power II, that such a negative socio-political culture has been perpetuated, even nurtured, by the political system embodied in the present Constitution; and that, in order to preserve the gains of EDSA II and seize the heaven-sent opportunity it presents before we lose it forever, we must NOW act with dispatch to do what needs to be done;

NOW, THEREFORE, we call upon our national leaders headed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and all Filipinos concerned with the future of their children and their children's children to unite as one and join* in the mighty effort to forge, against the stiff opposition of the power brokers and political *capos*, a new Constitution to be crafted by a convention of freely elected delegates embodying the political system that will enable us to return to old and cherished Filipino values and traditions, and to build a Philippines free from the shackles of foreign as well as native colonial masters—strong, prosperous, great, standing proud among the family of nations, its rightful place in the sun assured for all time.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! Sulong Sambayanan!

Issued this 7th day of February, 2001.

FRED M. MAGBANUA
Presiding Chairman

ELISEO P. OCAMPO
Executive Chairman

ANTONIO E. NACHURA
Trustee

FROILAN BACUNGAN
Trustee

JOAQUIN GOCHOCO
Trustee

REYNALDO O. HALILI
Trustee

EDITHA ARCIAGA-SANTOS
Trustee

Armando A. Ricarte Jr
ARMANDO RICARTE, JR.
Trustee

**Call Rose or Atty. Ricarte at T. 725-1481, 722-0432 & 724-0595 for an application form for membership in the Sulongbayan Movement and a copy of a free pamphlet on the "Five Pillars of True People Power" or visit us at the Sulongbayan Movement Foundation at the 2nd Floor of the Ocampo Heritage Bldg., 214 Wilson St., San Juan, Metro Manila.*

advt.

CORRUPTION CASE

Sirven gets star welcome at trial

PARIS—An oil executive nabbed last week after four years in hiding got a star's welcome on Wednesday, with applause, kisses and handshakes, during his first appearance at a major French corruption trial that at times resembled a high-society gathering.

Scattered applause greeted Alfred Sirven—a pivotal figure in the case—as he slipped into the courtroom where former Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, his ex-mistress and five others have been on trial for two weeks.

Kisses, handshakes and chatting followed, with more than half the brief court session turned over to socializing between the high-profile defendants and Sirven, all but transforming the muraled and oak-paneled courtroom into a Parisian salon.

Until now, Sirven, 74, had been tried in absentia.

Presiding Judge Sophie Portier, after brief questioning, suspended the proceedings until March 12 so Sirven can prepare his defense. Ignoring a request from Sirven's lawyers that their client be freed, she ordered him to remain at Paris' La Sante prison.

Sirven, former No. 2 man at Elf Aquitaine, is alleged to have been the central figure in a vast scheme mounted within the oil giant and featuring a slush fund to buy influence in France and around the world. He is accused of participating in a misappropriation scheme involving some $400 million in Elf funds.

The state-run company was bought by TotalFina last year.

SIRVEN

In what may be a first attempt to mount a defense, Sirven's lawyers said they were filing a complaint for theft for the disappearance of personal effects, from photos to a phone directory, from his various Manila residences.

Lawyer Eric Turcon refused to say whether the action was tied to the corruption case.

However, the daily Le Parisien on Wednesday published on its website the contents of what it said was an address book belonging to Sirven, names, it added, that could prove useful to investigators. *AP*

Libyan lodges plea vs Lockerbie ruling

EDINBURGH—Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, the Libyan convicted of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, lodged an appeal Wednesday against last week's guilty verdict, the Scottish courts service said.

A spokesperson for the service said the formal notice of intention to appeal was lodged at the justice office in Edinburgh.

Megrahi was found guilty by three Scottish judges in Camp Zeist a week ago of the murder of all 270 people killed when a Pan Am jet blew up over the town of Lockerbie, southwest Scotland, in December 1988.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but had been expected to appeal.

His co-accused, fellow Libyan Al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah, was acquitted and was celebrated as a national hero when he returned home a day after the verdict.

Jim Swire, a spokesperson for the British relatives of Pan Am 103, said: "We anticipated that this would happen and the matter is now back in the hands of the Scottish court."

Megrahi, for his part, remains in custody in Camp Zeist, a former military base in the Netherlands converted into a Scottish court for the marathon case, which began in May last year.

Under Scottish law, defense lawyers have two weeks from the verdict date in which to lodge notice of intention to appeal. In this case they did it within one week.

They then have a further six weeks in which to deliver full details of the appeal, outlining the grounds on which it is based.

It is then considered by a single judge who weeds out worthless appeals.

If he or she grants permission to appeal the case will proceed to the High Court. If this happens, five judges will hear the case at Camp Zeist, where Megrahi will remain until it concludes.

The judges hearing the case decided that Megrahi was a Libyan intelligence agent, obtained electronic timers and somehow smuggled the suitcase bomb onto an Air Malta plane from Valetta to Frankfurt.

There it was transferred onto a Pan Am plane to London's Heathrow airport, and finally onto the doomed jet bound for New York.

The explosion ripped open the plane, killing all 259 passengers and crew on board and 11 people in Lockerbie itself as blazing debris rained down. Libya is adamant that Megrahi is innocent. *AFP*

REUTERS

CHINESE VALENTINE'S DAY

Chinese villagers perform a traditional folk dance to celebrate the Lantern Festival, which is also dubbed the Chinese Valentine's Day, at Feizhuang village near Tianjin, China. The Lantern Festival marked the end of a two-week celebration of the Chinese New Year, Feb. 7.

Court calls Sudanese national as witness in US bombing trial

NEW YORK—Osama bin Laden tried in the 1990s to buy uranium, possibly to make a weapon, a defector from his militant Islamic group testified Wednesday in the trial of four men accused in the bombings of two US embassies in Africa.

Jamal Ahmed al Fadl said he had served as the intermediary in the transaction between Bin Laden, then in Sudan, and a seller he identified only as "Bashir," who demanded $1.5 million for a cylinder of uranium about one meter long.

Al Fadl said he did not know if Bin Laden successfully completed the purchase.

Prosecutors have called the 34-year-old Sudanese national, who defected from Bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization and sought protection from the US government, to help bolster their case that Bin Laden masterminded the near-simultaneous 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which left 224 people dead, 12 of them Americans.

US authorities have expressed numerous concerns over the past few years that a radical group was trying to obtain material to build a nuclear bomb. Al Fadl's testimony offered details of the effort by Bin Laden, a sworn enemy of the United States.

Al Fadl said he was assigned to the effort by an al-Qaeda leader known by the pseudonym Abu Fadl al Makkee, while the organization was based in Khartoum from 1991 to 1996. He said he did not remember the exact date.

"Al Makkee told me: 'People in Khartoum have uranium. We need to buy that,'" Al Fadl said.

At a meeting in Bait al Man, a city north of Khartoum, Al Fadl was able to examine the merchandise, he said.

"There were documents about the origin of it: South Africa, serial numbers and things about quality," al Fadl said. "The machine to test the cylinder would come from Kenya."

It was during the period al-Qaeda was in Sudan that Al Fadl, a slightly-built man with a closely-cropped beard, left the group and offered to provide US authorities with information. His testimony is expected to last through Thursday.

The four suspects on trial here since Monday have pleaded innocent. All are believed to be members of al-Qaeda.

If convicted, two of the accused—Saudi national Mohamed Rashid Daoud Al Owhali, 23, and Tanzanian Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, 27—could face the death penalty.

The remaining two—Lebanese-American Wadih El Hage, 40, and Jordanian Mohamed Saddiq Odeh, 35—face life in prison. *AFP*

Lindbergh widow, 94, dies in Vermont home

MONTPELIER, Vermont—Anne Morrow Lindbergh, the wife of aviator Charles A. Lindbergh, who became his copilot and wrote extensively about their pioneering adventures in flight, has died at her rural Vermont home. She was 94.

Lindbergh died Wednesday in Passumpsic, about 50 km northeast of the state capital.

"Mother died quietly in her second home in Vermont with her family around here," Reeve Lindbergh, the youngest of the Lindberghs' six children, said in a statement issued by the family foundation.

Lindbergh, who published 13 books of memoirs, fiction, poems and essays, also lived in a secluded home in Darien, Connecticut.

A painfully shy woman, she was thrown into the spotlight of her famous husband immediately after they met in 1927, shortly after he made his famous solo flight across the Atlantic.

She soon became her husband's co-pilot, co-navigator and radio operator. The couple's flights across oceans and around the world fascinated the American public.

In 1932, the already-famous Lindberghs drew worldwide attention when their first child, 20-month-old Charles Jr., was kidnapped and murdered.

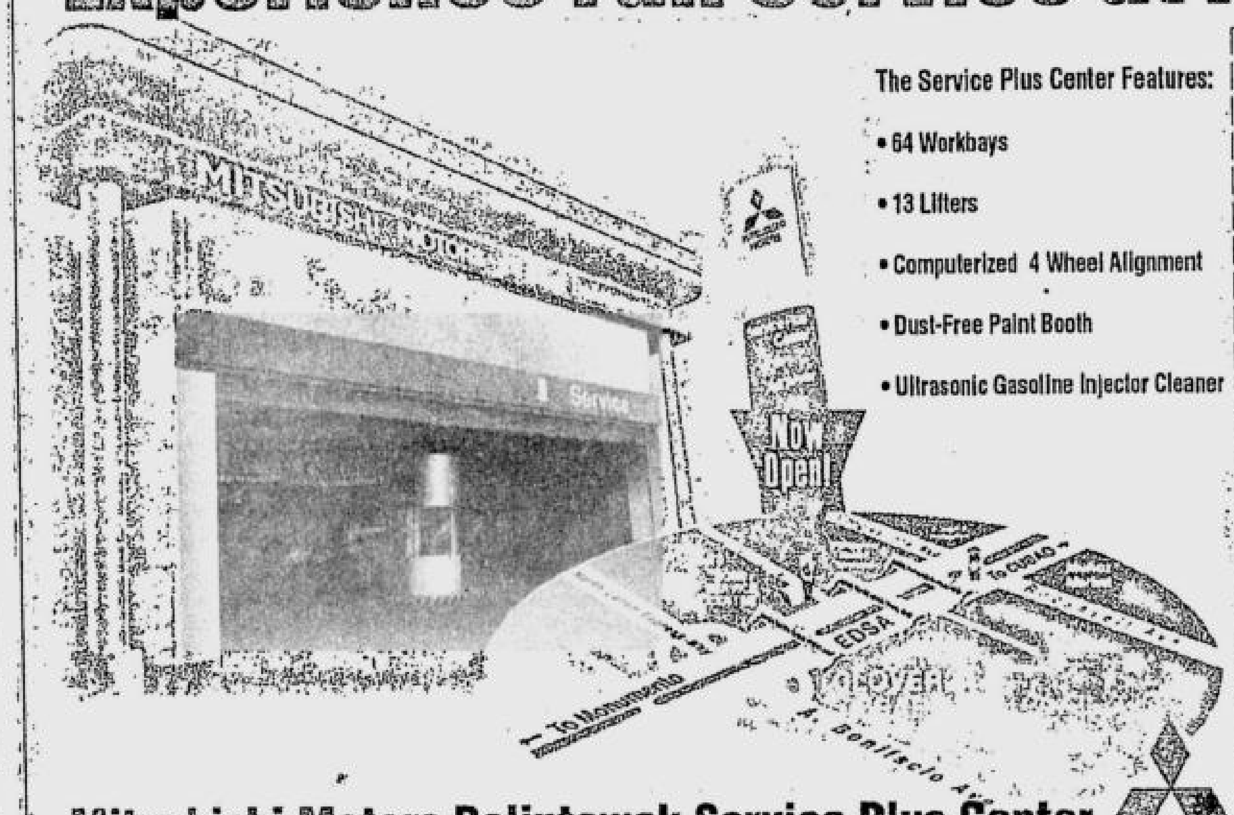
In an introduction to her journals, she affectionately recalled her famous fiancée as "a knight in shining armor, with myself as his devoted page."

Charles Lindbergh and Anne Morrow were married May 27, 1929, in a private ceremony at the Morrow residence in Englewood, New Jersey. Charles Lindbergh died in 1974.

From 1929 to 1935, the Lindberghs flew across the United States on tours promoting air travel as a safe and convenient method of transportation.

In 1930, she became the first American woman to get a glider pilot's license.

On their flights, while her husband sat in the front seat, Lindbergh was in the rear seat, operating the radio and gathering weather conditions and landing information. *AP*



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Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and eastern Luzon, eastern Visayas and Mindanao, including southern Palawan, will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila HI 31° Lo 22°	**Baguio** HI 23° Lo 13°	**Tuguegarao** HI 30° Lo 21°
Laoag HI 31° Lo 21°	**Clark Zone** HI 31° Lo 21°	**Tagaytay** HI 29° Lo 18°
Legazpi HI 29° Lo 25°	**Bacolod** HI 31° Lo 23°	**Roxas** HI 31° Lo 26°
Cebu HI 31° Lo 24°	**Tacloban** HI 30° Lo 25°	**Gen. Santos** HI 30° Lo 24°
Zamboanga HI 30° Lo 25°	**Cagayan de Oro** HI 31° Lo 22°	**Davao** HI 30° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Maricar D. Tolesa, PDI Research.

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Unions fear 'midnight' passage of power bill

BAGUIO CITY—Union leaders of the National Power Corp. accused the Macapagal administration of orchestrating a "midnight passage" of the controversial Omnibus Power Bill, following a secret meeting Tuesday night between Malacañang officials and selected senators and congressmen.

The meeting casts doubts on a policy decision issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Jan. 24 to shelve House Bill 8457 and Senate Bill 2000, both versions of the power reform bill, said Abner Eleria, president of the Napocor Employees Consolidated Union (Necu).

A press statement read out by Antonio Calaycay, Necu board director, said the "midnight passage of the reconciled version of the House and Senate bill on the privatization of Napocor could be effected Thursday (Feb. 8)."

Eleria said Ms Macapagal could suddenly reconsider her decision to suspend the power measure.

But only former President Ramos can influence her turnabout, he said.

Many Napocor employees suspect Ramos, one of Ms Macapagal's key advisers, to be behind the secret "wheel-dealing."

Eleria claimed that the Palace meeting was held in a hotel in Manila and presided over by Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Among the participants were proponents of the measure that called for Napocor's privatization, including former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella, Senators ~~John Osmeña~~ and Sergio Osmeña III, and Negros Occidental Rep. Julio Ledesma IV, who now chairs the House energy committee.

Eleria said union leaders immediately "gate crashed" the secret meeting when they received word about it.

"But we could not insert any of our proposals. We were not recognized. In fact, the participants looked through us as if we were invisible. Leading most of the talk was Romulo, although the fervent lobbyist for a power bill now was Ledesma. Fuentebella kept quiet," Eleria told the INQUIRER in Filipino.

"It would be unwise for a lame-duck Congress whose terms expire (on Thursday) to effect the midnight passage . . . And it would be deceitful and disastrous for President Macapagal to sign such a bill," he said.

He said union leaders had asked all of the Napocor employees to standby for a new series of protests should Ms Macapagal concede to pressure, "which is already tremendous because of the extra-lobbying exerted by the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank."

The IMF had conditioned the release of $300 million in rehabilitation loans on the measure's early passage, according to a 1999 IMF letter sent to Fuentebella.

The bicameral conference committee continues to meet on the measure despite Ms Macapagal's decision, said Jimmy Salman, president for Northern Luzon of the Napocor Employees and Workers Union (Newu).

Salman said the committee had not been transparent about its deliberations toward the end of the year 2000, continuing debates behind the scenes of the impeachment trial of former President Estrada until last month.

He said many union members were relieved last month by Ms Macapagal's decision to shelve the bill because it extended Napocor's corporate life, "although it will need to be sold eventually because (the) government failed to stop its hemorrhage."

"In fact, maybe the President should consider the other features of the bill that reform the industry, because these may be necessary, although we still feel Napocor must be saved from the auction block," Salman said in Filipino.

He said the unions continue to drum up support for the exclusion of all government-owned hydroelectric plants from its list of facilities to be privatized.

Eleria acknowledged union suspicions that Ramos was a major factor in a likely midnight bill, although the former president was not involved in the secret talks.

Ramos initiated the privatization of many power facilities in 1994 and used emergency powers granted by Congress to lease out power plants to independent power producers (IPPs) to end the blackouts plaguing the whole country in 1992.

Ramos' IPP contracts paved the way for private contractors to control sectors of the power industry, Eleria said.

"It is the hand of Fidel Ramos which we now fear because we were informed that he was trying to influence (Ms Macapagal) into reconsidering her stand on the bills. The primary objections the Napocor unions had against the bill is that it perpetuated onerous contracts between government and IPPs or private contractors currently leasing state-owned power plants, which Ramos allowed in 1993," he said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

De Oro abuzz over new Erap seat of gov't

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will meet with various sectors here tomorrow amid reports the deposed president, Joseph Estrada, is setting up his government in Mindanao, with Cagayan de Oro as base.

Estrada, who claimed he is "still President," is considering holding office in Mindanao, with Cagayan de Oro as base because "he enjoys full public support in Mindanao," said Reuben Canoy, head of the Mindanao Independence Movement.

"It would also enable his (Estrada) administration to carry out the development of Mindanao as the food basket of the nation," Canoy said in a press statement.

Canoy said Estrada would inform foreign governments "that he is the legitimate and constitutional President."

Canoy added that Mr. Estrada would also call on the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and government offices to uphold the Constitution and follow him as their lawful commander in chief.

Canoy did not say when Estrada will arrive in Cagayan de Oro.

But Malacañang scoffed at Canoy's announcements.

"You know Reuben. I (will) just smile," Presidential Assistant for Southern Mindanao Jesus Dureza said. "How will Kagayanons react to this? I hope they are not amused."

Among those who are not amused is Mayor Vicente Emano, Estrada's pointman in Mindanao.

Emano said he would "never allow" Estrada to hold office here because he does not want the city to become a battleground for pro and anti-Estrada forces.

"I don't want my fellow Kagayanons to suffer. I will never allow this to happen," Emano told a local radio station.

Emano told dxIF Bombo Radyo that Ms Macapagal called him up Sunday to verify intelligence reports that Estrada would set up a government here. *Froilan Gallardo and Ellen P. Red with a report from Carolyn O. Arguillas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

15,000 sacks of smuggled rice seized

LILOAN, Southern Leyte–The Bureau of Customs has seized a vessel now docked at the pier here after it was found to be loaded with 15,000 sacks of rice believed to be smuggled from Vietnam.

Eufenio Aguilar, customs district collector based in Tacloban, said the vessel, Premier, would not be allowed to leave the pier until its crew members are able to present papers showing that the shipment of rice was legal.

The ship captain, whom Aguilar did not identify, and his 18 crew members were also ordered to stay inside the vessel.

Premier docked at the Liloan pier on Sunday. Customs officers boarded the ship and demanded the documents covering the rice shipment.

The crew failed to present any.

Aguilar said his men had staked out at the pier since Saturday after they were alerted that a ship carrying smuggled rice would dock in Liloan.

Documents presented by the crew members indicate that the vessel came from Davao City, Aguilar said.

But when they looked at the ship's logbook, they found that the vessel traveled for 16 days before arriving in Liloan on Sunday, he added.

Aguilar said this was impossible because Davao City to Liloan is only a day's travel by sea. Liloan on Panaon Island is about 200 nautical miles from Davao City.

The ship captain told customs officials that it took them 16 days because they developed engine trouble along the way, he said.

But Aguilar said they did not believe the skipper because no report was filed before the Maritime Industry Authority on the incident.

Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau

Rotary International
District 3820

CREATE AWARENESS
TAKE ACTION

Messages

My warmest felicitations to ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 3820 on its 2001 District Conference.

For years, the Rotary International has been at the forefront of community development and has substantially contributed towards the upliftment of the country's economic and social action. I hope this momentous event will strengthen camaraderie among your members and encourage you to continue your selfless dedication to nation building.

Civic oriented NGOs like the Rotary International continue to mold our country's citizens in becoming productive members of the society. I commend your organization for alleviating the lives of our countrymen and helping them gain more decent lives.

I call on the Rotary International District 3820 to continue building the foundations for a more peaceful and prosperous Philippines in the years to come. Everything is possible if we are united in effort and spirit to promote the growth and welfare of our nation.

Good luck and more power. MABUHAY!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

I am pleased to extend my good wishes to the Rotarians of District 3820 on the occasion of your DISCON 2001. Let me also congratulate you and thank you for all the wonderful things you have done for the alleviation of poverty and empowerment of the marginalized sectors of our society.

I join you in offering prayers of thanksgiving for the power, privilege and opportunity accorded you. It is good that you have recognized the duties and obligations which accompany these blessings. For indeed you have generously shared your time, talent and treasure with our less privileged brothers and sisters as evidenced in the numerous humanitarian programs of Rotary.

Please continue with your best efforts in the implementation of your projects and programs which contribute to a better country and a better world. I hope there will be more Filipinos who will think and act like you to help in the promotion of peace, harmony and prosperity.

Congratulations and may Almighty God's love and peace be with us all!

CORAZON C. AQUINO

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
Rotary Center
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FRANK J. DEVLYN
President, 2000 - 2001

To all Rotarians and Guests attending the 3820 District Conference:

Gloria Rita and I send warm greetings to everyone attending this 2000-2001 District Conference. We wish to express our great appreciation for the dedication of Gov. Rustico V. Recto Jr. and Lydia, who, along with the conference committee, have put together a comprehensive program of Rotary information, fun and fellowship. You have a unique opportunity to make new friends and expand your Rotary horizons through many shared experiences. I urge you to take full advantage of this exceptional event to meet with your fellow Rotarians in a spirit of fellowship and service.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for Gloria Rita and me to visit all the conferences, so I have invited an outstanding Rotarian to represent me at your conference. Please welcome Marcelina A. Aurelio as our personal representative. Lina is an exemplary Rotarian, an enthusiastic leader, and a delightful leader, and a delightful person. I'm sure you will enjoy her company during your district conference.

As this new millennium unfolds, I encourage you to find innovative and proactive ways to address the world's many pressing concerns. The Rotary year 2000-2001 is your chance to make a difference. You have real opportunity to affect your community – and all of humanity. Together we can make a difference as we ***CREATE AWARENESS*** *and* ***TAKE ACTION.***

Sincerely,

FRANK J. DEVLYN
President

Greetings and welcome to DISCON 2001, our celebration of Rotary achievements and triumphs!

As we have promised, our conference will be a healthy balance of business and pleasure. We left no stone unturned, so to speak, twisted some arms here and there, to ensure our success. We intend to pursue the purposes of a District Conference – to further the program of Rotary through different but very efficient channels.

Believing that Rotary is not just us, but our communities and our world, our invited plenary guest speakers are prominent government and public personalities who will address us on relevant and vital issues confronting our nation and us as a people. Our resource speakers on Rotary matters are Rotarians of impeccable affinity and fidelity to the cause of Rotary.

Today, motivated by RI Pres. Frank Devlyn's exhortation for us to ***Create Awareness,*** *let us all rediscover our kind of humanitarian service as we interact with each other during this two-day conference. Let us take pride and pleasure in the especially prepared song, dance and other entertainment numbers by Rotarians and Rotary spouses during the Cultural Night. We shall also enjoy ballroom dancing with music by a live band at the Governor's Ball.*

After these two-day leisure and business activity, we shall again buckle to work to ***Take Action*** *on activities and programs that really matter – those that promote international understanding, harmony and peace among peoples in all nations. I sincerely hope all of us will come out of here more fired up, more inspired, more motivated.*

Again, welcome and MABUHAY TAYONG LAHAT!

DG RUSTICO "CHITO" V. RECTO, JR.
RY 2000-2001

Rotary International
District 3820

CREATE AWARENESS
TAKE ACTION

Pres. Cory addresses RI District 3820's DISCON 2001!

PDG Marcelina "Lina" Aurelio is RI President Frank Devlyn's Representative

District 3820 Governor Rustico "Chito" V. Recto, Jr., Rotary Year 2000-2001

On February 9-10, 2001, Rotarians from Southern Tagalog and the Bicol Provinces comprising District 3820 and guests from other Rotary districts nationwide will converge at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City for its annual District Conference.

District 3820's DISCON 2001 will be very momentous indeed! **District Governor Rustico "Chito" V. Recto, Jr.**, and the **DISCON Committee**, chaired by **PP Edgardo "Ed" Reyes**, and hosted by the **Rotary Club of Lipa South, Lipa City**, have ensured a balanced mix of business and entertainment for all Rotarians to savor and enjoy!

On this occasion, the District's triumphs and achievements will be showcased through exhibits of club projects and activities which best exemplify RI Pres. Frank Devlyn's different task forces. No less than **former Pres. Corazon C. Aquino** will be the Keynote Speaker on the first day, 9 February. Other guest speakers are distinguished government officials and personalities from the private sector. Meanwhile, seasoned Rotarians from District 3820 and other districts will talk on Rotary matters and present vital Rotary programs like the TRF, GSE, Matching Grants, and 3H Grants, e.g., Rotagrilife and Vitamin A Supplementation. The Rotary Spouses will have their fill with a Talk on Social Grace by **Ms. Rosie Mata Castro**, Manager of Marketing & Events Division, PICC.

Clubs and Rotarians with 20, 25, 30, 40 and 50 years of service and membership will be recognized, and new Rotarians of the District will be welcomed. The Rotary Foundation District Service Awards will be handed out. Special features of the two-day event are the Rotary Knowledge Game Show with cash prizes on stake and the District Choral Singing and Ballroom Dancing Contests. The world-renowned **Bayanihan Dance Company** will present its world-class performance together with selected Rotary clubs during the Cultural Night, and **Lady Valerie & Her Band** will provide the music at the Governor's Ball. The Rotarians in attendance will savor the fun and raffle prizes galore, topped by a round-trip ticket to the International Convention in San Antonio, Texas!

Former Pres. Cory Aquino, one of the prime movers of EDSA People Power 1 and 2, will be the Keynote Speaker of the District Conference.

The DISCON 2001 caps the many successful district affairs of District 3820 under the leadership of DG Chito. The Rotarians belonging to the 92 clubs in the District have fully cooperated with the District Leadership Team to ensure that all plans and programs for Rotary Year 2000-2001 are accomplished. Each Rotarian in District 3820 continue to create awareness, and take action to fulfill his oath to Rotary—to provide humanitarian service to fellowmen, at the same time subscribing to high ethical standards in his/her vocation, to help build understanding, goodwill and peace in the world.

District 3820 is comprised of the provinces of Laguna, Batangas, Mindoro, Quezon, Marinduque, and the Bicol area.

Rotary District 3820 Projects:

Rotary Community Corps Micro Credit/Village Banking Environmental Protection Healthcare Vitamin A Supplementation Disabled Avoidable Blindness Polio Plus Literacy Group Study Exchange Youth Exchange Youth Leadership Awards Rotaract Interact Youth Impromptu Speaking/Oratorical Contest

PDG Lina Aurelio, District 3800, RI President Frank Devlyn's Personal Representative.

Senator Franklin Drilon will be the Luncheon Speaker on Day 2, February 10.

Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto will talk on her center project for Lipa City—The Minimum Basic Needs (MBN). A program of the City of Lipa, and the Participation of the Private Sector and Rotary Clubs.

DISCON Chair Ed Reyes, Past President of Rotary Club of Lipa South, host of the affair.

PDG Guillermo "Emong" Castasus (RY 1994-1995) of the Rotary Club of San Pedro will receive Rotary International's Service Above Self Award, one of the 141 awardees chosen from 357 nominees worldwide.

❶

❷

❶ DG Chito with Pres. Pol Piñera and members of the Rotary Club of Lucena North, together with some of the beneficiaries of the club's "Shelter Program". The Shelter Program subscribes to DG Chito's key interests—One Life, One Shelter, One Livelihood.

❷ District 3820 has always put premium importance on the development of the youth—Rotary's future. DG Chito poses with the youth leaders of Southern Tagalog and Bicol Province during the recently concluded Rotary Youth Leadership Awards.

Cebu bishop asks Erap to just rest

By Lino K. Parone Jr and Roger V. Paller
PDI Visayas Bureau

CARDINAL VIDAL

CEBU CITY–Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal has an advice to deposed President Joseph Estrada: Take a rest and stop contesting the legality of the Macapagal presidency.

"If I may have (a) chance to go to Manila perhaps I will be able to say something to him (Estrada), and tell him that if he (sees) that the Lord has given him time to rest, let him rest for the good of our country," Vidal said.

"After all, it was he who said to me as he followed my advice that he will voluntarily step down in order to prevent bloodshed," Vidal said, recalling his conversation with Estrada on the eve of the ousted President's departure from Malacañang.

"You know the will of the Lord is already clear for us so he (Estrada) should respect that (assumption of Ms Macapagal to the presidency) but everything must be done in a peaceful way," Vidal said.

He said Estrada might have been waiting for him to question the legality of the Macapagal presidency.

But he said he could not call the deposed President because he does not have Estrada's direct line in his residence on Polk Street, Greenhills.

Vidal said the last time he talked to Estrada was in Malacañang on the evening of Jan. 19 when he advised Estrada to step down to avoid bloodshed.

When Vidal returned to Cebu the next day, Estrada and his family left Malacañang Palace and Ms Macapagal was sworn in as the country's 14th President.

Vidal was a spiritual adviser and a good friend of the deposed President. He earned the ire of multi-sectoral groups, including some of priests in Cebu, after he refused to take a stand at the height of the anti-Estrada protests in Cebu.

During his 70th birthday on Tuesday, Vidal admitted that he was hurt by criticisms on his relationship with Estrada.

He told those who came to his residence Tuesday morning for an early morning serenade to wish him a happy birthday that he was "standing alone."

"From afar or when not facing me, respect is less if not there anymore, and according to them, it is their human rights," Vidal told some 500 well-wishers who came to join him during the 5:30 a.m. Mass in the Archbishop's Palace. Vidal won't identify his tormentors but referred to them as those "who were not doing their work."

Vidal also said he had been ridiculed countless times and was called names.

"Year in and year out, I have tried my best to be a good pastor and good fisher of men to all. But then there are those who say, 'we are no sheep, we are free to discern and to dissent,' or 'we are no fish, we have minds of our own,'" Vidal said.

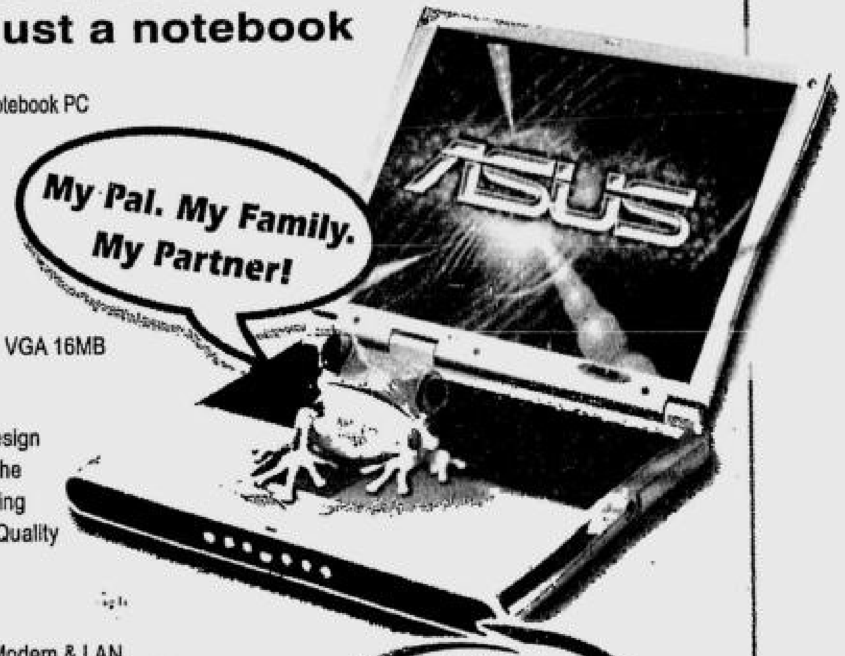
"But because it is for God and for Christ and His church that I said what I said and did what I did . . .," he added.

Vidal said he is ready to face more ridicule and disrespect because it was for God.

He said he has only five years more as archbishop of Cebu since it is mandatory for bishops to retire by the age of 75.

But before he "drifts away to a lonely place," Vidal said he would spend those five years trying to make a difference, despite the criticism.

"I will try my best to contribute to the stability of the government and to help out in the priorities of our cities and province in Cebu, to help out even if I stand alone," he said.



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Two of Lagman's killers identified

(From page A1)

Philippines (Isafp) is zeroing in on a newly formed terror group allegedly set up by quarters loyal to deposed President Joseph Estrada.

A ranking Isafp official said agents started looking into the reported existence of this group—which has ex-military and criminal elements among its hitmen—even before the Lagman killing on Tuesday.

"We have the same lead as the PNP. We're closely coordinating," the Isafp official said on condition of anonymity.

The PNP investigator and another member of the task force, who both asked not to be named, told the INQUIRER that "reliable assets" had identified two of the gunmen as "inactive" NPA members.

The police assets identified the suspects through the four sketches of the gunmen's faces. Six witnesses, including Lagman's secretary Michelle Caños and his son Dante, have come forward to give testimonies about the killing.

One of them told the police that the gunmen shouted as they fled that they were NPA members. But Caños, Dante and another witness denied hearing the suspects shout that they were NPA guerrillas.

"We already have their names and our men are just waiting for them to surface," one of the investigators said.

The agent said the two identified suspects were known to have been involved in the communist armed movement in the past but have "lain low."

"Our asset said they have been into drugs for some time now," the agent said.

The source said that the "speed and style of the killers bore the signature" of communist assassins.

However, the investigator said that another member of the task force was making sure that the identified suspects were really the ones in the sketches.

"Sometimes, the face in the sketch is different from that of the suspect we arrest," the agent said.

The other identified suspect was one of the two lookouts. Some of the six witnesses had also told investigators that his face was familiar, the agent said.

Task force investigators are also looking into the possibility that the gunmen kept a safehouse inside the UP campus.

"They simply disappeared without a trace after they alighted from the Toyota Corolla they commandeered," the agent said.

The investigators are also in the "process of elimination" in identifying the owners of the fingerprints lifted from the commandeered car. The agent said the results would be out before the weekend.

Strong leads for Corpus

Isafp chief Col. Victor Corpus said that his group had "strong leads" and were working closely with police.

Corpus said his group was also verifying reports that forces identified with Estrada were recruiting former military and policemen as well as gangsters to create disorder by attacking government officials and leaders of the anti-Estrada movement.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay described Corpus as some who "knows the ins and outs of the rebel movement and the military."

Corpus defected to the communist movement in the 1970s but was captured 10 years later. He was readmitted to the military after the People Power Revolt in 1986.

The Isafp source declined to provide further details of the new terror group as "it may alarm the target."

Two weeks ago, acting Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes and acting PNP chief Mendoza received reports about the existence of this group.

"We're verifying it," the Isafp official said.

The source of the report, who asked not to be identified, said the formation of the terror group was the fallback option adopted by quarters loyal to Estrada.

"They were trying to recruit a coup force to be used against the new (Macapagal) administration," the source said. "It was supposed to be a mercenary force."

"They couldn't recruit the right numbers so they downgraded their objective," the source said.

The group's targets include, among others, appointees to the Macapagal Cabinet and personalities involved in the People Power Part II that led to the ouster of Estrada.

"Since they could not launch a coup, their objective now is to raise mayhem," the source said. "They will try to create an air of uncertainty, make the stock market nervous."

Kuratong Baleleng

The source said a recruitment drive was undertaken after Estrada was unseated, targeting active military and police personnel, ex-soldiers and policemen, as well as criminal elements.

The source said these include the Kuratong Baleleng kidnap gang, which is based in Mindanao, the so-called Lost Commands, and even former Muslim rebels.

"They have the money to do it," the source said. "Their recruitment was all over the country."

The source of the report said he and his associates had earlier urged the proper authorities to take a "proactive stance."

"We made the report two weeks ago. That's why there were already efforts to investigate this development," the source said.

Ermita said they were expecting a "good lead" as of yesterday.

He said it was "possible" that the Lagman killing was part of destabilization efforts against the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ermita, however, said he was confident that the new administration would "hit the ground running" despite attempts to undermine its stability.

"The Armed Forces and the PNP are really behind the President and the government," Ermita said.

Earlier, Reyes said that the AFP had received "very, very raw" reports of a plot to destabilize the new government. He also said that the top brass would take "very seriously" any information that military personnel were being drawn into such an effort.

Hate campaign

A militant group linked the death of Lagman to a "hate campaign" against the leftist movement aimed at marginalizing the mainstream leftist groups that played vital roles in the ouster of Estrada.

"There seems to be an ongoing hate campaign staged by groups and elements who want to eliminate the prestige gained by the left in the ouster of former President Estrada," said Rodolfo Sambajon, national chair of the fisherfolk group Pamalakaya in a statement.

Sambajon lambasted presidential spokesperson Renato Corona for quickly attributing the ambush-slay of Lagman to rival leftist groups.

Carapali Lualhati, national commander of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) denied having a hand in the killing although he admitted that the RPA-ABB has had political and ideological differences with Lagman's group.

"We have nothing to do with it (killing). It is not worth killing him," he told the INQUIRER.

He also pointed out that Lagman, Art Tabara and Romulo Kintanar were targets of verbal attacks by the CPP after they broke away from the group in 1991.

Jose Maria Sison, CPP founding chair, had denied responsibility in the killing.

Members of Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP), the group headed by Lagman, and its affiliate groups in Cebu and Iloilo staged indignation rallies to demand justice for their fallen leader.

About 100 members of BMP and Sanlakas held a rally yesterday afternoon in front of the Police Regional Office headquarter on Osmeña Boulevard, Cebu City.

Edgardo Navarro, BMP director for Central Visayas, said they were giving the Macapagal administration until Feb. 12 to solve the killing.

"The government should prove that it has nothing to do with the killing by arresting the culprits," he said.

In Iloilo City, close to 30 BMP members and their allied organizations held an indignation rally in front of a mall.

Ruben Alfaro, secretary-general of BMP in Panay, said the killing of Lagman was meant to "sabotage the working class movement."

Alfaro last met Lagman on Feb. 2 during a convention in Baguio for the upcoming launching of the Partido ng Manggagawa, which is vying for a seat in the House of Representatives as a party-list group.

He recalled that Lagman was then concerned for his security and told him that there were two things ahead of him—jail or the cemetery. ***With reports from Dave Veridiano and Andrea Trinidad-Echavez in Manila; Carla. P. Gomez, Hazel P. Villa, Jhunnex Napallacan and Diosa Labiste, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Senate to probe Lagman, Dacer cases

THE SENATE will investigate the killing of leftist labor leader Filemon "Popoy" Lagman on Feb. 6 and the disappearance of public relations agent Salvador "Bubby" Dacer in November last year.

Sen. Renato Cayetano filed the resolution yesterday directing his Senate committee on justice and human rights to conduct the inquiry into Lagman's murder and Dacer's disappearance.

In Resolution No. 933, Cayetano said the inquiry is meant to "reassure our people that the government has the capability to protect them and will not tolerate lawlessness and violence to reign in our country."

He said there is an "urgent need" for law enforcers to solve these cases.

Lagman, chair of the militant Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino, was gunned down by four men inside the campus of the University of the Philippines in Quezon City last Monday. He died a few hours later at the Philippine Heart Center.

Dacer and his driver have been missing since November last year following their abduction in Makati. His vehicle was found abandoned in a ravine in barangay Mabato, Maragondon, Cavite on Nov. 24

Lagman and Dacer are both Bicolanos.

'Popoy' a rebel with a soft spot, says daughter

(From page A1)

gentleman," she said.

Michelle portrayed her late partner as spontaneous and sometimes childlike, a one-time revolutionary with a soft spot.

"He might have exuded a strong personality but at times, he could be like a child. He was always excited when you would give him a gift," she said.

In his lighter moments, he was "very naughty," she added fondly.

But the professional Lagman was a different animal, a former communist cadre, radical labor leader and committed activist with a deep understanding of workers' issues, Michelle added.

The long route

Iskra said her father—though he traveled without bodyguards—was conscious of the need for security and would usually take maze—like routes to mislead anyone who might be tailing him.

"Even if he was just going to the next street, he would take the long route to make sure that he could not be followed," she said.

"He would often tell us that he only had two destinies: either jail or cemetery," said Wilson Fortaleza, spokesperson of the group Sanlakas, which Lagman founded with other labor leaders.

Uncompromising

Iskra, who grew up with her paternal grandmother, said she had "not an inch of doubt" about her father's integrity, despite allegations linking him to scandals involving the Public Estate Authority and Philippine Airlines.

"I saw how he sacrificed for the cause of the labor movement. He was uncompromising when it came to the principles he believed in. It hurt him, we knew, but he would tell us that the intrigue was part of the struggle," she said.

"He had no personal ambition. Everything he did was always for the good of the movement. He did not own anything, except perhaps, for his clothes and a few personal things," Iskra said.

She admitted that, at times, especially when she was confronted with personal problems, she would question her father's deep involvement in the movement.

"But when he explained things to me, the ill feelings (went away). I know he was doing what he did, not only for us, but for the people," Iskra said.

While her father spent most of his time away from his family, "he was always there when we needed him," she said, adding, "all we had to do was call him and he would come."

50,000

Lagman's friends, family and comrades hope to mobilize 50,000 people for his funeral march on Monday.

Former Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman vowed to carry on the fight of his brother in the halls of Congress along with militant labor groups who are gearing for the party-list elections in May.

"With more resolve, I am going to run for congressman in the 4th district of Quezon City and carry on the fight," Lagman said in an interview Wednesday night at the UP Church of the Risen Lord where his younger brother's remains lie.

The former congressman, one of the lawyers who assisted the House prosecution panel in the aborted impeachment trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada, said his brother's assassination was not unexpected.

"It could have happened any time," he said.

"He lived dangerously," he said. "He lived by the hour."

Burial, birth

Sanlakas Rep. Renato Magtubo said the Partido ng Manggagawa, which Popoy Lagman helped organize, was scheduled to hold its founding congress before Lagman's funeral march on Monday.

"The establishment of the Partido ng Manggagawa, the workers' very own political party that will participate in the coming party-list elections, will be our tribute to Ka Popoy," Magtubo said.

"The day of his burial will be the day the Partido ng Manggagawa is born," he said.

"Ka Popoy will not die in vain," Magtubo said. "We will make sure that this very last project, the Partido ng Manggagawa, will be a success."

Schedule

The founding congress will be held at UP's Bahay ng Alumni, where Lagman was ambushed.

A necrological service is scheduled for 3 p.m., followed by the funeral march at 4 p.m. from the Church of the Risen Lord to the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina.

Magtubo said that in the last few days of his life, Lagman was steeped in discussions with union leaders of the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino over the formation of the party, but added that Lagman himself did not plan to run as candidate in the party-list elections.

Lagman had wanted local union presidents to be fielded as nominees in the party-list elections, and as candidates for councilors and provincial board members in the local elections, according to Magtubo.

"Ka Popoy firmly believed that union presidents should be the voice of the working class in the halls of Congress," Magtubo said.

A lot of dreams

Bob Anduiza, president of the Flight Attendants and Stewards Association of the Philippines (Fasap), said the workers' party was one of Lagman's "biggest dreams" for the labor movement.

"He would always say that the only way to fight and survive is to organize," Anduiza said.

Anduiza said he knew Lagman since 1994 and was "impressed by his dedication to alleviate the plight of the workers and commitment to union organization."

"He had a lot of dreams for the workers," Anduiza said. "He wanted to unite labor. And his vision was one day to have our own newspaper and radio station."

'You can't kill ideas'

Edgardo Bilayan, president of the Bagong Kapisanan ng mga Manggagawa sa Philippine National Railways, said the gunmen may have killed Lagman but not the ideals he stood for.

"You can't kill his ideas. You can't kill his good intentions," Bilayan said.

Elmer Labog, secretary general of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, said Lagman's assassination would not deter militant labor groups from continuing with the fight for workers' rights and welfare.

"Whoever Lagman's murderers are, they are mistaken if they think that the militancy of the labor movement will be lessened by Lagman's death," Labog said.

"We can even say that in the coming months after Lagman's death, there will be an upsurge in the organization and mobilization of workers espousing genuine and militant trade unionism," he said.

'Nothing wrong with Ramos boys'

(From page A1)

that President Ramos fought so hard to have," she said.

Ms Macapagal, titular head of Lakas-NUCD, Ramos' party when he won the presidency, said that this playing field helped the country survive the Asian financial crisis.

And "it will help us (get) through this period of difficult recovery," she predicted.

Admitting that he was a "recycled" Ramos official himself, Executive Secretary Renato de Villa, a former defense secretary, said he doubted highly that the new President would allow herself to be anyone's "puppet."

"This is nobody else's team but President Macapagal's," he said.

De Villa played a key role in selecting nominees for top security posts, including the national security adviser and officials of the Philippine National Police and the defense department.

Introduced yesterday as the "God-given" President, Ms Macapagal was welcomed to the Rotary event by Filipino-Chinese businessman and Manila Bulletin owner Emilio Yap.

She promised to improve "moral standards" in governance.

The President acknowledged that her power was "on loan from the people" and said that she would make sure that the lessons of the past two bloodless revolts were remembered.

"Indeed no leader should be truly inebriated by power to remember that this power is on loan from the people. And this power can be recalled anytime," Ms Macapagal said.

Payback time

The new President, three weeks in office, has made it a point to attend nearly every military activity that she has been invited to—from the Philippine Military Academy Annual Convention to boodle fights with the members of the Scout Rangers.

Foreign newsmagazines have noted how Ms Macapagal has repaid her debt to key military figures partly responsible for her ascension to power.

"President (Macapagal) now has to pay back and watch her back," according to a Time magazine article titled "Brass Tactics" and written by Sandra Burton and Nelly Sindayen.

"Arroyo realizes she has to accommodate her most influential people power partners, not the eponymous people but the cabal of generals who hoisted her to power," read the article in Time's Feb. 5 issue.

"She moves swiftly to cement their support, shrewdly naming former President Ramos as special ambassador of good will—an anemic sounding title for what could be a very powerful role," it said.

"People Power (II) changed the occupants of the presidential palace but the military may be calling the shots," it added.

In recent functions, the President has made it a point not to talk to local reporters but only to the foreign press.

The first and only time that she answered local reporters' questions was at her first press conference, where she dashed rumors that her favorite general, Southcom chief Edgardo "Spine" Espinosa, was plotting a coup.

Ms Macapagal has also not agreed to ambush interviews—a far cry from her accessibility while she was Vice President.

No overnight change

For his part, Ramos has denied wielding any "power" over Ms Macapagal.

"How can I be a power when I am jobless, and really just helping? This is the obligation of ex-presidents," he said in an earlier interview.

"The President is her own man," he quipped at the time.

Yesterday, Ms Macapagal said she was confident that her government would achieve the promises she made at Edsa.

But, she cautioned, "I don't wish to raise the hopes of our people beyond what is attainable."

"The change of governance does not change things overnight. A change of government does not lead to instant jobs, instant income generation, instant solutions," she told the Rotarians.

"But it leads to what our country urgently needs at this time—direction, credibility and responsibility in government," she added.

Buenaventura . . .

(From page A1)

Urban Bank last year.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, however, said he would not yield to pressure for him to resign.

"I have a duty to do and we need to preserve the independence of the BSP," Buenaventura said in the face of accusations hurled against him by Makati Rep. Joker Arroyo and Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno.

The Bankers Association of the Philippines also rushed to Buenaventura's defense and urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to respect his tenure of office.

Buenaventura, a classmate of Estrada at the Ateneo High School, has a guaranteed six-year term ending in 2005.

Arroyo and Moreno, who served as House prosecutors during Estrada's impeachment trial, said Buenaventura had favored Estrada and the BSP employees over the ordinary depositors of Urban Bank.

"That is the issue . . . He must answer that and not just claim he has tenure," Arroyo said.

Buenaventura earlier denied the allegations of the two congressmen that he tipped off Estrada, allowing him to withdraw P143 million from a numbered account shortly before Urban Bank shut down.Arroyo and Moreno, however, pointed out yesterday that the BSP Provident Fund likewise pre-terminated a P15-million deposit with Urban Bank before it declared a bank holiday on April 26.

Moreno said the deposit was preterminated on April 24, four days before maturity date.

"The idea of pre-terminating a fixed deposit is an indication that the BSP knew that Urban Bank will cease operations," Arroyo said.

"There can be no doubt that they had to terminate the high-yielding account prior to its stated, agreed maturity in order to jump the gun on Urban Bank ahead of the other depositors," Moreno added.

Central bank sources confirmed the P15-million withdrawal made by the BSP Provident Fund.

They also said the three of the BSP deputy governors who sit in at Monetary Board meetings also served on the BSP board of trustees.

"They gave preference to themselves over private depositors. They had inside knowledge that Urban Bank was closing. And they betrayed the trust of the people," Arroyo said.

But Buenaventura said he was not a member of the board of trustees.

"As far as its operations are concerned, you should ask the Provident Fund management to clarify the rationale behind the withdrawal," he told reporters.

Subpoena

Buenaventura urged Arroyo and Moreno to subpoena the records of Urban Bank to determine if Estrada maintained an account with the bank.

The two legislators said Estrada maintained numbered account "858" at an Urban Bank branch in San Juan.

"How can I tip him off if I don't know whether he has an account there or not?" Buenaventura asked, adding that the central bank cannot compel banks to reveal identities of their depositors.

"If indeed the (former) President had an account with Urban Bank, then the ones who should be asked to account for that would be the owners, the managers, the people who opened the account," he added.

"The best way to settle this is for the prosecution team to subpoena the records so that they can check if the account was opened in accordance with the manual of regulations of the central bank," Buenaventura said.

"Then we can then find out if indeed the numbered account belongs to him (Estrada) and if the account has its proper documentation. On the basis of that, then the central bank can investigate."

The central bank filed charges of fraud in September against 10 senior officials of Urban Bank and its affiliate Urban Investments Inc. in connection with alleged irregularities that led to the closure of the bank.

Urban Bank, which owns 40 percent of Urban Investments, declared a bank holiday due to massive withdrawals last April. It was later ordered closed by the central bank.

Bankers

Despite the charges against Buenaventura, the Bankers Association of the Philippines said it was important for the Macapagal administration to respect Buenaventura's tenure and the BSP's independence.

"In the last three administrations, the term of three central bank governors were all respected," said Placido Mapa, BAP president and Metrobank vice chair.

Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said the government would respect the term of Buenaventura.

"What we want is truth and justice and the rule of law and a level playing field. We follow the law and Buenaventura had said he is adhering to all these," he said.

In Cebu City, two business leaders are supporting calls for the ouster of Buenaventura.

But Efren Valiente, a director of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Bert Emphasis, president of the Mandaue City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the Macapagal administration should consult with business and banking groups regarding Buenaventura's replacement. ***With a report from Malou Guanzon-Apalisok, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Gloria to pick 13 Senate bets for ruling coalition

(From page A1)

Castro, former Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto Yasay; and former Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Liwayway Vinzons-Chato.

The People Power Coalition, formerly called the "Edsa Forces," represents candidates picked from Ms Macapagal's party Lakas, Executive Secretary Renato de Villa's Reporma, Sen. Raul Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko, Lito Osmeña's Promdi and a number of independents who were part of the People Power II movement that ousted Joseph Estrada from the presidency.

Sources said that there had been no letup in the squabbling within the coalition, and that this had upset the timetable for the announcement of the administration's senatorial ticket.

They said the announcement was to have been made the other day.

"They now want another survey to settle the issue," an insider said.

Just in time

The Senate passed the resolution just in time for the last day of the session yesterday.

"Normally we elect 12 senators, and the 13th is a loser. But in this case the 13th can be made a winning senator to occupy the position for three years—the unexpired portion of the term" of Guingona, said Majority Leader Francisco Tatad, author of Senate Resolution No. 934.

Tatad's resolution enjoins the Commission on Elections to fill up the vacancy simultaneously with the election for senators on May 14.

While the 13th elected senator will serve only the rest of Guingona's term, the 12 others will serve a full six-year term.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the House of Representatives did not have to pass a counterpart measure to make the resolution effective.

"We checked the law and found out that only the Senate has to pass the resolution. So it is for implementation by the Comelec now," he said.

Pimentel said the Comelec would have to make the provisions for the election of an additional senator.

Sen. John Osmeña stated his view that the 13th senator should be elected separately from the 12 candidates for a full term.

But Pimentel said the Senate's position was that the candidate with the 13th largest number of votes would be the one to serve the rest of Guingona's term.

Pre-selected

According to Senate sources, 10 candidates were pre-selected Wednesday night for approval by the coalition.

A senator said the coalition had already approved De Castro's inclusion in the slate, but other sources denied this.

"He was being pushed by (Sen. Renato) Cayetano, but there was very heavy opposition from (Finance Secretary) Bert Romulo and the civil society, particularly Kompil (Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino), because he is deemed to be pro-Erap," a party source told the INQUIRER.

Said a second source: "He is not with People Power. In fact, it was he who has been attacking us, so why should we take him in?"

De Castro said last week that he had not decided about running for senator, and under what party.

He said it was De Villa who had sent an emissary to convince him to join Reporma and the coalition ticket.

'Winnable' vs deserving

A congressman said the squabbling had divided the coalition into two camps: those advocating for "winnable" candidates and those pushing "deserving" ones.

"There are those entitled to be in but are being eased out by those who do not deserve (to be in)," he said.

Some are questioning the inclusion of Pangilinan, who was portrayed as having taken a "pro-Estrada" stance during the ousted President's impeachment trial, he said.

He added that Pangilinan and De Castro had earlier planned to run under Estrada's ticket before People Power II occurred.

On the other hand, the congressman said, both Pagdanganan and Apostol had landed at the tail end of popularity polls, thus raising doubts about their "winnability."

"This argument has been forwarded against Pagdanganan and Apostol," he said.

But supporters of the two men have cited their "constituencies"—Bulacan for Pagdanganan and Eastern Visayas for Apostol—that would help the coalition ticket overall, the congressman said.

Pangilinan and De Castro, he said, did not have the same constituencies and would only be the recipients of, and not contributors to, the coalition's resources.

The congressman also said there was no need for a "12-0" win as most of the senators would join the administration coalition after the elections.

'Lucky'

Ricardo "Dong" Puno Jr., Estrada's former press secretary, filed his certificate of candidacy as senator with the Comelec yesterday, a day he believes as lucky based on his consultations with *feng shui* experts.

Speaking in Filipino, he noted that the sun was out and there was no rain, and that there would be a full moon last night.

"*Simbolo ito ng magandang panimula* (This is a symbol of a good beginning)," he said.

Puno and a crowd of supporters, including close family members, went to the Comelec central office in Intramuros after a thanksgiving Mass at the nearby Manila Cathedral at around 8:30 a.m.

Puno, 55, said he had been advised to file his candidacy on the 8th because it was a lucky number and it fell on a Thursday, which he said was a lucky day.

But the lawyer and former TV newscaster said luck was not his only basis for seeking a seat in the Senate.

He said that he had long prepared for his candidacy, but that he was not taking any chances.

Puno was the 18th to file a certificate of candidacy with the Comelec. Of the others, only three names were of note: Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Marcos lawyer Oliver Lozano, and Camilo Sabio, president of the Philippine Constitutional Association.

At around 1 p.m., Ma. Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal, Estrada's former adviser on children's affairs, filed her own certificate of candidacy.

Both Puno and Madrigal are candidates of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

Escorted by around 100 placard-bearing supporters from Tondo and the PUP compound in Sta. Mesa, Manila, Madrigal crossed the street from the Manila Cathedral to the Comelec to the sound of drums and wild cheers.

Marine guards posted at the Comelec gates blocked the crowd and allowed only Madrigal, her lawyers and a handful of aides inside the compound.

Madrigal, 42, said she hoped to be the "voice of the youth" in the Senate.

"It is imperative that we empower our people to help themselves through developmental programs and not merely through charitable doleouts," she said.

Madrigal, former chair of the Able Foundation for streetchildren, is a granddaughter of the martyred Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos of Pampanga and of former Sen. Vicente Madrigal of Ligao, Albay.

'Hallucinating'

The College Editors Guild of the Philippines said Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, former chief of the Philippine National Police, would not get votes from the youth in the May 14 elections.

"Lacson is suffering from a bad case of hallucination," said CEGP secretary general Ronalyn Olea. "He has acquired the Erap syndrome."

Olea also said Lacson's recent statement that he loved public service as much as he hated politics was "extremely hypocritical."

"His track record proves otherwise," Olea said, adding:

"He has actually committed grave human rights violations while he was the chief of the PNP."

DONG AND EDONG compare notes at the LDP meeting at the New World Hotel in Makati on Thursday. ERIK ARAZAS

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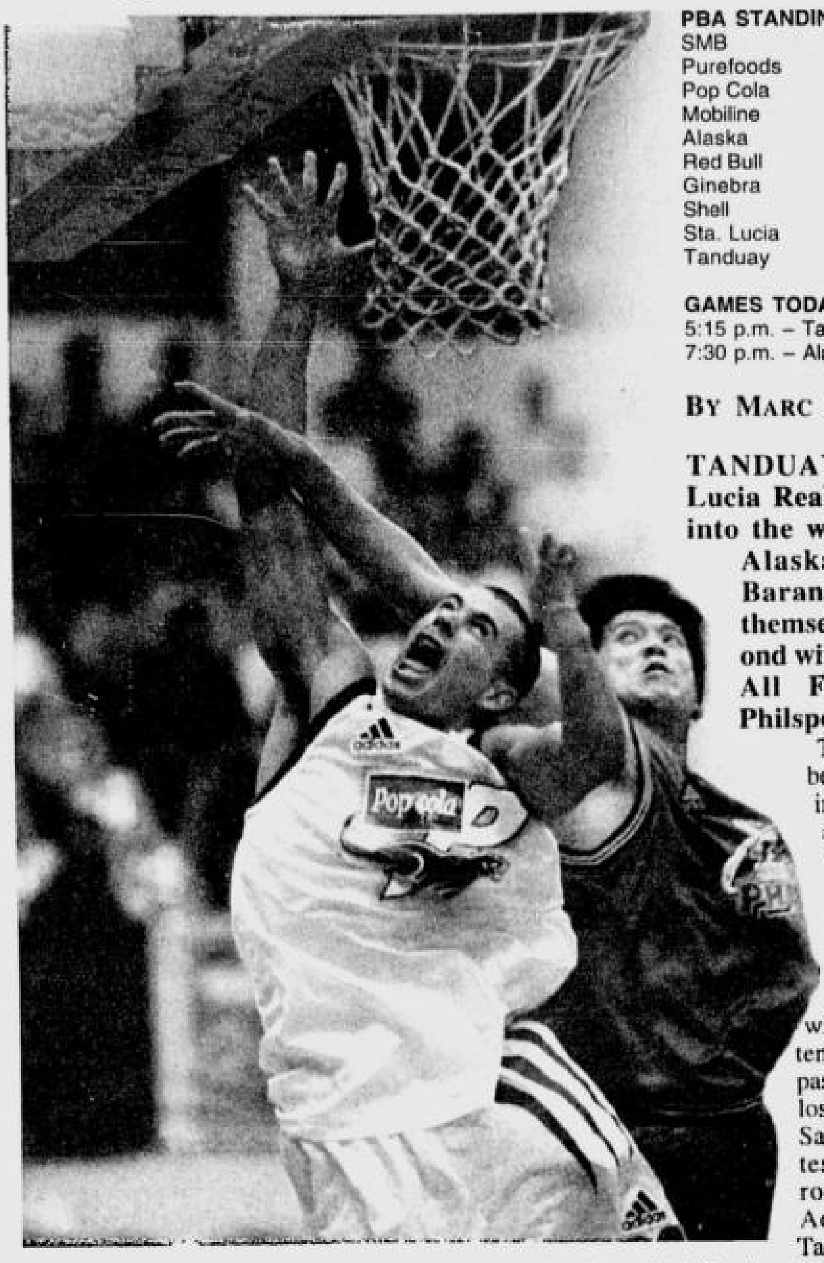
PBA ALL-FILIPINO CUP

Tanduay, SLR eye 1st wins



RUDY Hatfield of Pop Cola (left) gets a hard foul from Mobiline's Jerry Codiñera during their PBA game Wednesday. The Phone Pals won, 79-72.
ROMY HOMILLADA

PBA STANDINGS	W	L
SMB	2	0
Purefoods	2	0
Pop Cola	1	1
Mobiline	1	1
Alaska	1	1
Red Bull	1	1
Ginebra	1	1
Shell	1	1
Sta. Lucia	0	2
Tanduay	0	2

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
5:15 p.m. – Tanduay vs SLR
7:30 p.m. – Alaska vs Ginebra

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TANDUAY Gold and Sta. Lucia Realty hope to break into the win column, while Alaska Milk and Barangay Ginebra line themselves up for a second win today in the PBA All Filipino Cup at Philsports.

The Rhummasters will be the heavy underdogs in the 5:15 p.m. game against the Realtors, who, despite of the massive buildup in the pre-season, have yet to get their rhythm going.

For sure, Sta. Lucia will be riding on the intensity it showed in the past two games – where it lost to Alaska Milk and San Miguel Beer – courtesy of its sensational rookies like Francis Adriano, Jercules Tangkay and Felix Belano.

However, the Realtors' dynamic threesome has yet to blend with the Sta. Lucia system now being run by Paolo Mendoza with Marlou Aquino and Dennis Espino on the forefront.

That proved to be the Realtors' main problem in losing their first two games against highly organized squads like the Aces and the Beermen.

Tanduay won't have any firepower to show except for Jeff Cariaso and Dondon Hontiveros, who were big letdown in the Rhummasters' losses to Purefoods and Ginebra.

In their last two games, not even the presence of Bong Hawkins and Noli Locsin inside the paint can bolster the Rhummasters, who are still longing for their resident slotman Erik Menk.

Menk has been working double time to get confirmation from the Department of Justice. And although there were reports that he would resume playing this conference, his fate still hangs in the balance.

Sources inside the Tanduay camp said there might be a Valentine's Day surprise for the franchise where the 6-foot-5 Menk would be playing his first game since being suspended.

However, the source could not determine how the Fil-American cager can pull it off since his Filipino mother has reportedly been turned American citizen before Menk was born, which doesn't qualify with league and DOJ standards.

In the other game, the Gin Kings gun for a second straight win against the Aces at 7:30 p.m., hoping to ride the crest of their 84-72 win over Tanduay last week in Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

However, Alaska, despite sustaining a 95-77 defeat from the Hotdogs, packs a sound coaching system and deep bench to make things difficult for Ginebra.

Pasig run gets going Feb. 25

FOUR key cities in Metro Manila are joining hands with other government and private organizations in support of the first Pasig River Heritage Marathon on Feb. 25.

The cities of Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati and Pasig have pledged their participation in the 42-kilometer marathon that serves as part of the awareness campaign program and advocacy efforts of lead agency Clean and Green Foundation Inc. (C&GFI) through its project Piso Para sa Pasig (PPP) towards the continuing need to rehabilitate the Pasig River. These cities played hosts to the running clinics held in various venues since October last year.

"One way of re-awakening the consciousness of the public toward our rehabilitation efforts is through this mass-based sport as running. That's why we believe that through the staging of this marathon, we would have considerable achievement come 2008, which is the target year of our initial 15-year development thrust for the Pasig River," said Imelda Sarmiento, executive director of C&GFI during the formal launching of the event yesterday at The Orchidarium.

Aside from C&GFI and the four cities, other agencies supporting the event are the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, Gomburza, Visions in Action Enterprises Inc., Archdiocese of Manila, Caritas-Manila, React, Sagip Pasig Movement, Riverwatch, Unilever, Jollibee, Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation, San Miguel Corporation, New Balance, Republic Asahi Glass Corporation and Integrated Waste Management Inc. The marathon is also sanctioned by Patafa and endorsed by the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

The route of the 42-K event, which will start at 4:30 a.m., will take the runners from the take-off point at the historic Walled City at Aduana Street, Intramuros located between Manila Cathedral and Fort Santiago, across the 11 bridges traversing Pasig River, through the main thoroughfares of the four cities, until the finish line at the Global City at The Fort in Taguig.

Registration is now ongoing at Visions in Action Enterprises Inc. at #5 Agusan Street, La Loma, Quezon City with tel. nos. 742-0283 and 742-3091; Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (Patafa) at Rizal Memorial Sports Complex with tel. nos. 525-2854 and 522-1451 and at the C&GFI Office at Intramuros, Manila with tel. nos. 528-0504 and 528-0976. The offices of the mayor in the four cities also serve as entry form distribution centers.

Chua grabs golfest lead in Bacolod

HEIDI Chua made her move yesterday, matching par to grab a 2-point margin with one round left in the 38th Southern Ladies Open at the Bacolod Golf & Country Club in Bacolod City.

The 23-year-old defending champion from Wack Wack had one birdie against a bogey in shooting 34-36 at the short but extra-tight par-70 course carved right at the heart of a robust sugar plantation, with a gurgling river snaking around it.

Adding her 1-over 53 points the day before using the Molave points system, Chua overtook first-day leader Carmelette Villaroman of Canlubang in a determined bid to prove that her win in Cagayan de Oro last year was no fluke.

"She's really focused on winning again this year," said Vic Chua, Heidi's father. "I have given her all the encouragement that she needed before she came here to defend her crown."

Vic, who said Heidi used to be a nationally ranked badminton player, is the controlling stockholder of the company that manufactures the famous Storck candies.

Villaroman couldn't sustain her par-matching effort of 54 points on Wednesday en route to a 3-over-par 51, failing to recover from a first-hole bogey in a birdie-less day for the 24-year-old 1993 Philippine Open champion.

But with Heidi's 107 points as against Villaroman's 105, a thrilling finale is expected today as the two gird for a final-round shootout in the NGAP-organized series that stakes a Mizuno golf set as a hole-in-one prize.

Lina de Guzman, also of Canlubang, was third at 103 only 4 points behind Chua following a fighting 53 in the event sponsored by DHL, Hidden Spring, DPC, the city government of Bacolod, PAL, VF Belmonte Corp., Philippine Sports Commission, Bacolod Executive Inn and Master Sports.

The rest of the field in the championship division (0-10 handicap) include Loralie Roberto of Riviera with 49-48=97, Therese Dabao of Sta. Elena with 47-50=97, Lucy Landicho of Canlubang with 51-43=94, Anya Tanpinco of Bacolod with 45-46=91, Tracy Locsin of Canlubang with 42-48=90, Carina Ricamonte of Sta. Elena with 44-45=89, Aileen Chua of Canlubang 49-39=88, Shella Dollosa of Bacolod with 49-43=83, Ruby Chico Walker of Canlubang with 36-45=81 and Marjorie Lopingco of Alabang with 29-39=68.

Others:

Class A (11-17 handicap): Maita Lustre (Negros) 48-45=91, Cecile Co (Lanang) 48-41=87, Jocelyn Garcia (Negros) 43-41=84.

Class B (18-23 handicap): Aurora Ibo (Riviera) 41-39=80, Arlette Dizon (Southwoods) 35-37=72, Aloma Lopez (Wack Wack) 35-35=70.

Class C (24-28): Grace Banas (Bacolod) 41-38=77, Betsy Tuason (Wack Wack) 38-39=77, Ellen Chua (Wack Wack) 38-36=74.

Class D (30-36): Farah Imperial (WackWack) 30-31=61, Victoria Tan (Lanang) 33-22=55, Ester Garcia (Wack Wack) 26-25=51, Gina Regalado (Negros) 29-22=51.

Olajuwon lifts Rockets past 76ers

PHILADELPHIA—Hakeem Olajuwon scored 18 points and added 14 rebounds while Steve Francis and Cuttino Mobley each scored 23 points as the Houston Rockets beat the Philadelphia 76ers, 112-87, in the NBA on Wednesday.

The Rockets, just 11-22 in the Western Conference, improved to 13-3 against the East by defeating the team with the NBA's best record.

Allen Iverson had 26 points on 10-for-28 shooting and Theo Ratliff added 14 for Philadelphia, which slipped to 36-14.

The Sixers enter the All-Star break with three losses in their last four games. Houston has won two straight.

Houston took its biggest lead to that point, 70-48, on two free throws by Olajuwon midway through the third quarter. A buzzer-beating jumper by Iverson cut it to 81-69 after three.

But the Sixers missed six straight to start the fourth quarter and Houston pulled away with a 15-2 run. A 3-pointer by Matt Bullard gave the Rockets a 96-71 lead with 7:08 left. Philadelphia didn't get closer than 22 the rest of the way.

Olajuwon, coming off an 18-point, nine-rebound performance in a 100-86 victory over the Knicks on Monday, made 7-of-14 from the free throw line.

Lakers 85, Suns 83

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant hit a 15-foot jumper with 2.3 seconds remaining to clinch the victory and finished with 32 points as Los Angeles extended its winning streak to three games.

Bryant's shot over the tight defense of Shawn Marion in the final seconds capped a 23-point second half. Bryant also finished with eight rebounds, nine assists and four steals.

Ron Harper added 16 points and rookie Mark Madsen had 13 for the Lakers, who raised their record to 4-2 since Shaquille O'Neal went to the sidelines Jan. 28 with a strained right arch.

Divac replaces O'Neal

Meanwhile, Vlade Divac of the Sacramento Kings will replace the injured O'Neal on the West team in the NBA All-Star game on Sunday.

Divac was picked for the team Wednesday by NBA commissioner David Stern. This is the first all-star appearance for the Yugoslav center, who in his 12th season in the league is averaging 10.4 points and 7.9 rebounds a game.

O'Neal is out with a strained arch in his right foot. West coach Rick Adelman of Sacramento will decide who will replace him in the starting lineup.

O'Neal's injured right foot is healing well, and it appears he'll return to action next week.

O'Neal was examined Wednesday by Dr. Phillip Kwong, a foot specialist who said if last season's regular-season and NBA Finals Most Valuable Player continues to progress well in the next few days, he'll rejoin the Lakers after the All-Star break.

Complete results: Houston 112, Philadelphia 87; Boston 94, Milwaukee 91; San Antonio 107, Cleveland 89; Orlando 107, Washington 98; Minnesota 117, Sacramento 88; New York 96, Dallas 93, 2OT; Portland 97, Seattle 80; Utah 92, Vancouver 82; Golden State 89, L.A. Clippers 88; L.A. Lakers 85, Phoenix 83. *AP*

SUBIC TILT

Cuarto, Agra top jr. tennis

SUBIC BAY—San Beda College's Christian Cuarto upset top seed Carlo Manalastas, 6-0, 6-7, 6-2, to bag the premier boys' 18-under division and rising star Jessica Agra trounced Sarah Jane Lim, 6-2, 6-3, at the close of the 2001 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Subic Bay Yacht Club recently.

Cuarto and Agra, who topped the girls' 12-under class, shared the limelight with PJ Tierro in the boys' 16-under bracket, Nico Riego de Dios in the boys' 14-under event, Raymond Villarete in the boys' 12-under class, Joshua Tan Jo in the unisex 10-under group and Krissy Alina in the girls' 16-under category.

On hand to award the trophies in the Milo netfest organized by CTW and supported by Adidas and Sports Kids were Olongapo Tennis Club president Divina Riego de Dios, Yacht club recreation manager Boyet Juaban and marketing head Jojo Ampeloquio.

Pierce upset

PARIS — Disappointed spectators hissed at French top seed Mary Pierce Wednesday after she crashed out of the Gaz de France WTA Tour tennis tournament in her opening singles match.

Pierce, ranked eighth in the world, fell in straight sets to unseeded player Anne Kremer of Luxembourg in the second round of the tournament at Paris' Pierre de Coubertin indoor tennis stadium.

The 6-3, 6-3 defeat in 64 minutes was Pierce's first match of the meet, as she had a bye into the second round. *AP*

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ALI-FRAZIER FIGHT

Jacqui Frazier-Lyde, daughter of "Smokin" Joe Frazier, puts her fist into a cake to demonstrate what she plans to do with Laila Ali (inset), daughter of Muhammad Ali, during a press conference Wednesday to promote their fight in June—perhaps on Father's Day—at Turning Stone Casino in Verona, New York.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Latin Beat 2. Zeus 3. Absolute Power 4. Gentleman's Copy 5. Wine and Roses

Race 2—1. Be Quiet 2. Gallop for Gold 3. Lady Victoria 4. All Powerful 5. Always

Race 3—1. Al's Princess 2. Magic Fingers 3. Due Process

Race 4—1. Hurry Prince 2. Lorna 3. Gifted Galloper

Race 5—1. Favorite Trick 2. Naic Warrior 3. Jackpot Baby

Race 6—1. Bulilit Express 2. Little Voices 3. Union City Boy 4. Final Justice

Race 7—1. Party Princess 2. Gold Mark 3. Strong Wind

Race 8—1. Globe Master 2. Divine Wind 3. Wings of Gold 4. Prince of Africa 5. Dynamite Jack

Race 9—1. Daseldurf 2. Celebration 3. Merry Melody 4. Sun Bride

Race 10—1. Leverage Buyer 2. Sukiyaki Blues 3. Stately Emblem 4. Join the Fun 5. Early Warning

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Pittsburgh Panthers vs West Virginia Mountaineers at 8 a.m. (r- tomorrow at 2 a.m.), Marquette Golden Eagles vs Louisville Cardinals at 10 a.m. on ESPN

NBA - San Antonio Spurs vs New Jersey Nets at 9 a.m. (r- 9 p.m.) on Star Sports

NBA Inside Stuff at 8:30 p.m. on Star Sports

GOLF: Inside the PGA Tour at 12 noon (r- 8 p.m.) on Star Sports

LPGA Takefuji Classic, First Round at 4:30 p.m. on ESPN

PGA AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, Day One at 11:30 p.m. on Star Sports

BILLIARDS: WPBA Classic Semifinal #2 at 8 p.m. (r) on ESPN

SWIMMING: World Cup (Sweden) Highlights at 12:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

SNOOKER: 2001 Nations Cup Semifinal #1 at 1 p.m. (r) and Semifinal #2 at 10:30 p.m. on ESPN

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Role model

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE MOST important thing about the annual Coke Go-for-Goal national football program is this: The players, most of whom come from poor families and impoverished public schools, learn the values of dedication, sportsmanship and intense competition in an atmosphere of fair play.

And one more thing: The under-16 privately funded tournament, now on its 17thyear, exemplifies Coca-Cola's role in supporting this youth and sports grassroots development program, serving as an example of good corporate commitment that other companies should emulate. Coke, by the way, has been a longtime supporter of sports, stretching back to 1928 when it sponsored the Amsterdam Olympic Games.

In the just ended Go-for-Goal season, won by host West Negros College, more than half of the participating teams came from public schools which otherwise could not afford to have their own sports development projects.

"For sure, the tournament has touched the lives of thousands of Filipino schoolchildren since it was launched in 1984," said lawyer Rene Adad, president of the Philippine Football Federation, which took over the program's administration beginning with the 197-1998 season, leaving only the planning, funding and publicizing to the soft drink manufacturer. Adad is a former Philippine branch manager of the Coca-Cola Export Corp. who now serves as senior adviser to the company.

For a field of 80 teams that saw action in its maiden year in 1984, there are now some 400 competing teams today. And most of the country's national and youth team members are products of Go-for-Goal.

Since its inception, over 120,000 youngsters have played the sport considered as "the greatest game on earth" and benefited from it. In fact, some of the players have not even ridden an airplane, but the nationwide tournaments give them the chance to fly and play in various parts of the country, with the soft drink firm shouldering their transport fares and accommodation expenses.

Through the years, Go-for-Goal has received extensive media coverage and consistently cited by the respected Philippine Sportswriters Association for its role in grassroots sports development and promotion. The citation is well deserved and clearly illustrates that the country is not lacking in business firms with hearts of gold, business firms which are more than willing to share and give back to the community what it has given to them.

* * *

SPORTS TRIVIA. Maring Panlilio of the Road Runners Club of the Philippines was the first Filipina to compete in the Avon Marathon for women in London in 1980. For the next five years, other local women runners represented the Philippines in international races among them, the legendary Josefina Bonzo, who donned the colors in the inaugural World 10K race in San Diego, California, in 1983. The other pioneers were Mila Robiso and Rose Yumul, champions in 1981; Rosalinda Catulong, Mercy Rendaje, a protégé of noted race director Rudy Biscocho; Remedios Malubay, Narcisa Alvarado and Vilma Sta. Rosa, who competed in the World 10K in Madrid in 1984. Rowena Monton was tops in 1985, the year Avon ended its global sponsorship of women's running which started in Atlanta in 1978. But in September 1998 Avon returned to the scene, hiring as overall project director multi-talented Kathrine Switzer, the first woman to join and finish the previously all-male dominated fabled Boston Marathon in 1967.

* * *

For inquiries, call fax/phone (044) 933-1214.

POC mulls taking over affairs of cage body

By June Navarro

IF worst comes to worst, the Philippine Olympic Committee will take over the affairs of the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

POC first vice president Steve Hontiveros raised this possibility should the trouble in basketball threatens to spill over in the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games this coming September.

With only five months left before the biennial meet takes off, the protracted war between BAP leadership claimants Quintellano "Tiny" Literal and Freddie Jalasco is still at a standstill as the POC executive board decided to postpone its meeting supposedly set today.

Hontiveros bared that Frank Elizalde, International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippines, would try his hand in settling the two-month-old dispute before the POC executive board convenes to hand down its decision.

He pointed out that should Elizalde failed to patch things up, the POC will move in and stage a takeover.

"We did it before. We can do it again." Hontiveros told the INQUIRER. "The athletes are the ones who are carrying the brunt."

He cited an incident prior to the 1993 SEA Games in Singapore, where the POC took up the cudgels for warring gymnastics officials Pam Valdez and Soltero Tejada, who were involved in a similar leadership squabble.

"It's not good but if the problem persists we will be forced to do it," POC secretary general Romeo Ribaño added.

Hontiveros also noted the POC could also do the same thing to weightlifting and cycling, medal-rich disciplines whose officials are also in a state of quandary.

In another development, the joint POC-Philippine Sports Commission SEAG Task Force will wrap up its assessment of disciplines raring to compete in the biennial meet today.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor **EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA**, Assistant Editor

Becker says he's pa of baby girl

BERLIN—Retired tennis star Boris Becker acknowledged Wednesday that he is the father of a 10-month-old girl born to Russian model Angela Ermakova living in London. "I acknowledge the fatherhood. I take responsibility and will provide for little Anna," the three-time Wimbledon champion said in a statement issued by his spokesman in Munich. "Whatever I can contribute so that Anna will have a future as a happy girl, I will do." *AP*

2-ALL

Shark ties series vs Welcoat

Game tomorrow: (Makati Coliseum)
3 p.m.—Welcoat Paints vs Shark Energy Drink (Game 5)

BY DENNIS U. EROA

COLOR it red.

Title-hungry Shark Energy Drink took a big slice of Welcoat's formidable stature with an ego-boosting 62-50 victory, tying the PBL Challenge Cup best-of-seven championship series at 2-2 before an overflow crowd last night at the Makati Coliseum.

Shark's victory proved that its 65-60 win in Game Three was no fluke and shifted the momentum to the camp of coach Leo Austria. The Paintmasters won the first two games but showed signs of fading in the face of the ferocious comeback by the Power Boosters.

For the second straight time, the bemoustached Austria wore a blazing red shirt which he dubbed as good luck charm. Also wearing red were Austria's assistant coaches Jing Ruiz, Dayong Mendoza and Boy Galabin, team manager Jesse Chua and owner Raul Panlilio, who got a technical in the early going.

"They let us smell blood which only made us fiercer," said a delighted Austria. "We've proven the critics wrong."

Shark trailed in the first three quarters before flashing a new-found ferocity in the endgame.

Red was actually the Paintmasters' trademark color, but for the second straight night coach Junel Baculi's charges failed to match the intensity of their foes.

Ren Ren Ritualo completed a three-point play of Warren Ybañez as Welcoat took charge, 50-48, 7:33 remaining. What followed was something for the books as the Paintmasters, bothered by the Power Boosters' sticky defense, failed to score up to the final buzzer.

With his daughter and Cebuana wife watching, Roger Yap made mincemeat of Welcoat's defense as he scored eight of his game-high 23 points in the fourth period. High-leaping Chester Tolomia put the finishing touches as buried a triple which pegged the final score, 35 seconds left.

Ritualo escaped with 19 points despite getting extra attention from Michael Robinson and Ybañez, but Jojo Manalo, Eugene Tan, Anton Villoria and Yancy de Ocampo were all under pressure.

The scores:

SHARK 62—Yap 23, Tolomia 14, Ortega 8, Malabanan 6, Sotto 6, Ybañez 2, Castro 2, Rodriguez 1, Robinson 0.

WELCOAT 50—Ritualo 19, De Ocampo 11, Tan 6, Pamintuan 6, Manalo 4, Cruz 2, Zamora 2, Villoria 0, Pamintuan 0.

Quarters:10-17,27-33,44-47, 62-50.

TOLOMIA
20
SHARK

SHARK defenders Gerald Ortega (right) and Chester Tolomia harass Allen Patrimonio of Welcoat. Shark won, 62-50. ROMY HOMILLADA

Sy withdraws P1-M pledge to RP team

BY DENNIS EROA

FED UP with what he termed as "politicking to death" in the BAP ranks, PBL Chair Dioceldo Sy said he has decided to withdraw the P1 million seed money he promised for the national basketball team.

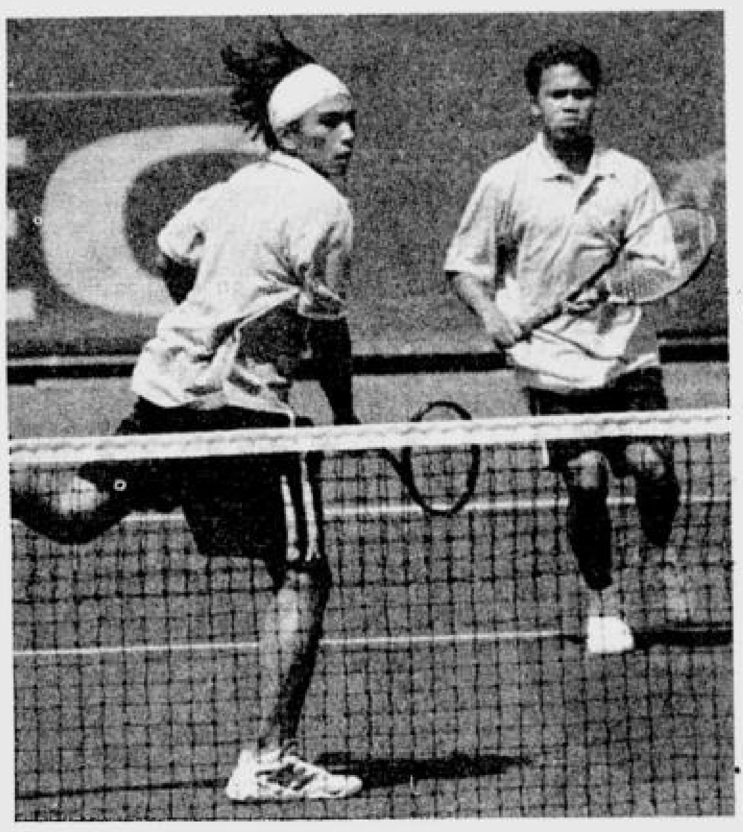
"I'm sick and tired of what's happening. The warring parties must wake up because they are doing irreparable damage to Philippine basketball," said Sy, who is now in his second term as chair of the PBL. "In a way, politics will signal the slow death of the sport."

During a recent PSA Forum at the Holiday-Inn, Sy, through PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad, announced that he would give P1 million from his personal fund for the training and other expenses of the nationals.

Sy's announcement drew applause and is expected to open the floodgates for help to build a foundation dedicated to the identification, training and exposure of present and future national cage squads.

Yesterday, Sy said he's disappointed by the ongoing rift between Freddie Jalasco and Tiny Literal for the BAP presidency. The POC arbitration committee has recommended the holding of a snap election to settle the leadership squabble.

After holding back comments on the rift, Sy finally gave the thumbs-down when the men's team under coach Boyzie Zamar refused to play PBL squad Montaña Jewels in a tune-up match yesterday at the Makati Coliseum.



VICTORINO (left) and Ruel in action during their doubles match against Bahrain. ERNIE SARMIENTO

RP Cuppers clobber Bahrain, gain semis

Today's matches
(Starting at 10 a.m.)
Philippines vs Sri Lanka; Singapore vs Bahrain; Kazakhstan vs Tajikistan; Saudi Arabia vs Qatar

THE PHILIPPINES blasted Bahrain, 3-0, yesterday to clinch a semifinals berth in the Asia-Oceania Zone Group III Davis Cup competitions at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Johnny Arcilla Adelo Abadia, Rolando Ruel Jr. and Joseph Victorino needed only three hours and 17 minutes to complete the annihilation of Bahrain, which bowed out of contention with its second straight loss in group A.

Arcilla, serving big and hitting hard, routed Bader Abdul-Aal, 4-0, 4-0, 4-0, in 35 minutes.

Not to be outdone, Abadia, the RP No. 1 singles campaigner, Thumped Sayed Ismaeel, 4-0, 4-1, 4-0, in 52 minutes before the tandem of Ruel and Victorino labored for just 90 minutes to beat Ismael and Omar-Mohammed Ahmed, 5-3, 4-1, 5-4 (8-6).

"The boys were good last Wednesday and they were better today," said non-playing captain Joseph Lizardo whose wards started their campaign by ripping Singapore, 3-0.

"But an early entry into the semifinals is no guarantee that we have already clinched a ticket to Group II. We still have to work hard to win this event," cautioned Lizardo, himself a many-time Davis Cup campaigner who has made a self-imposed mission of helping the country regain its once seemingly permanent seat in the elite Group I of the zone.

The champion and runner-up in this competition will be promoted to Group II next year where the champion will gain entry into Group I in 2003.

The Filipinos go for the No. 1 spot in the crossover semifinals today when they meet Sri Lanka starting at 10 a.m.

Also gaining early entry into Saturday's semifinals were Kazakhstan, which similarly swept Saudi Arabia, and Tajikistan, which defeated Qatar in group B.

Tiger's hair color normal anew

SAN DIEGO—The real reason for what's been holding back Tiger Woods was finally revealed Wednesday.

It's the hair. He dyed it blond over the holidays and hasn't won since.

That's all of three tournaments.

"Maybe I need to dye it back," said Woods, who might be the last person concerned that it's already February and he still doesn't have a victory in 2001.

His hair color is back to normal. He looks like the same player who won three straight majors and nine out of the 20 Professional Golfers Association Tour events he played last year. The only difference is the record, which is tough to top.

A year ago, Woods came to the Buick Invitational having won six straight PGA Tour events, the longest streak in 52 years. Now, he has gone six straight tour events without winning and everyone wants to know what's happened to him. *AP*

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

Over the past several years, a group of persons, with the connivance of certain officials of the past Administration, has continuously harassed Moldex Realty, Inc. in its Sapang Palay property in concerted, albeit futile, efforts to intimidate the latter into quiet submission to its unreasonable and unlawful demands.

This group unabashedly distorted facts, fabricated malicious lies and employed highly irregular machinations -- even using the media -- to attain its illegal objectives.

Moldex, a legitimate and reputable business concern and a major player in the real estate industry, did not and will never succumb to such pernicious attempts.

Moldex has always firmly believed that truth will eventually prevail and justice will reign. Hence, after a lengthy process of securing the conversion clearance for the property, which went through virtually the entire gamut of government institutions, Moldex was granted the following:

- **OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT** order dated 15 May 1998 granting conversion clearance to the property.
- **COURT OF APPEALS** decision dated 30 October 1998 affirming the Office of the President order granting conversion clearance to the property.
- **SUPREME COURT** resolution dated 08 March 1999 likewise affirming the decisions of the Court of Appeals and the Office of the President.
- **SUPREME COURT** Entry of Judgment dated 14 October 1999 attesting that the decision granting conversion clearance to the property has become final and executory.
- **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT** for the entire property dated 24 May 1999 issued by the Sangguniang Bayan of San Jose Del Monte.
- **IMPLEMENTATION** of the conversion order of the Office of the President under the Memorandum of the the Director of the Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance of the Department of Agrarian Reform dated 02 December 1999 to the DAR Region III Director.

Having failed in their manipulative efforts on Moldex and having been rebuffed by the government institutions higher than the DAR, this group has now resorted to waging a malicious and evil campaign of misinformation and disinformation against Moldex. With the obvious objective of maligning the good image and reputation of Moldex-- and in their typical foul vindictiveness -- this group is now using the media to peddle their lies and fabrications.

Truth shall always come out, though. Even the Department of Agrarian Reform, in its order dated 23 August 2000, categorically stated that "xx the matter has already been settled with finality xx" and that "xx when the President, through his Office , has acted as in this case, the head of the department can do no less but to comply".

Moldex will never allow its good image and reputation to be falsely sullied by these malefactors. It shall exert all efforts so that the implementation of legitimate and just decisions and actions will not be frustrated by this group.

MOLDEX REALTY, INC.

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LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

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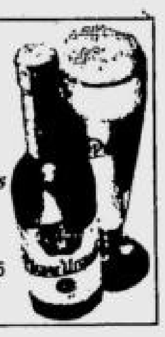

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Ateneo officials rule out jealousy in boy's suicide

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

THE JUNIOR'S Level Parents-Teachers Assembly (PTA) of Ateneo de Manila High School said Ateneo student Christian Duke Pizarro did not kill himself out of jealousy.

Investigators yesterday said that according to notes that Pizarro, 17, wrote as early as last October, the young man had been feeling sad and wanted to have a gun of his own.

Pizarro, a resident of Catanduanes Street, Paltok, Quezon City, was earlier reported to have shot himself before dawn Sunday at home. He died early Monday night.

The Central Police District's Criminal Investigation Unit desk officer earlier told the INQUIRER that Pizarro killed himself because he got jealous when his girlfriend danced with another student who was allegedly her crush during the school's

ATENEO/ A22

Now is the best time to cash in on trash A22

Bagatsing edges out Mel Lopez in Manila

BY JEROME ANING

ANOTHER Bagatsing is set to conquer the city of Manila.

The son of former Manila mayor Ramon Bagatsing, former congressman Amado Bagatsing, yesterday declared himself as the official administration candidate for mayor of Manila, edging out former mayor Gemiliano "Mel" Lopez who had earlier expressed interest in regaining his old post.

BAGATSING/ A22

Asistio: Santiago shouldn't have joined Malonzo

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

MILITANT group leader Nathanael Santiago, who recently announced he would run for councilor in Caloocan City, yesterday got his first bitter taste of politics.

Santiago was the object of a barrage of criticism from former Mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio

ASISTIO/ A22

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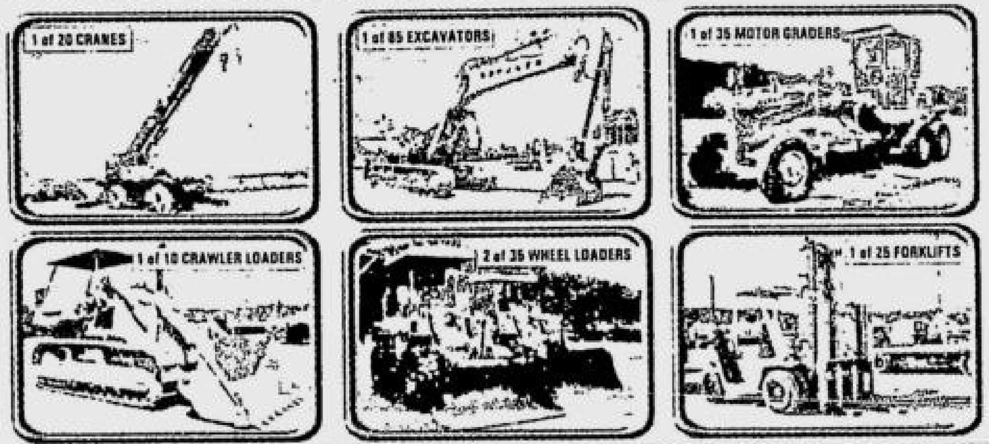

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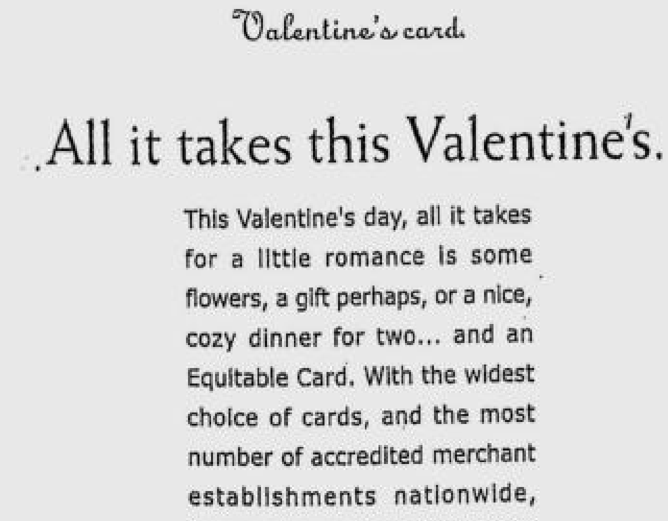

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Now is the best time to cash in on trash

By Constantino C. Tejero

(First of two parts)

TIME magazine recently came out with an article on the mounting garbage problem of Metro Manila, probably the only time the international newsmagazine reported on the garbage of a nation.

Time also saw the "special political relevance" of garbage in the Philippines, stretching from Smokey Mountain during the Marcos years to Payatas during the Estrada administration.

Metaphors aside, however, the reality reeks: Metro Manila's 14-million people produce 6,000 tons of garbage a day. Of these, only 50-60 percent is hauled off by garbage trucks to dumpsites and landfills, while the rest end up on the Pasig River and its tributaries, *esteros*, canals and the Manila Bay.

Particularly these days, one cannot go anywhere in the 11 cities and six towns of the metropolis without espying garbage colonies (now 120,000 tons of uncollected garbage) on street corners, even on islands in the middle of major thoroughfares, threatening to start a major epidemic (cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, leptospirosis, diarrhea, tetanus, and other infectious disease).

Permanent solution

"We will never solve the garbage problem because what the Metro Manila Development Authority is looking for is a dumpsite," says writer and environmentalist Odette Alcantara. "No one has told them the difference between waste management and garbage disposal."

She says these people don't have to go that far to find a permanent solution to the garbage problem, because it's right there in their backyard: composting and recycling.

She gives a simple definition of the problem and an equally simple illustration of the solution: Biodegradables *(nabubulok)* come from Mother Earth, nonbiodegradables *('di nabubulok)* come from Father Factory, therefore, it's only proper that these should be returned to their respective sources in the forms of fertilizer (through composting) and conserved resources (through recycling).

"You cannot separate composting from recycling," Alcantara says. "It's like separating God the Father from God the Son."

She believes certain people, including businessmen and government officials, insist on the present system of collecting and dumping garbage because it's profitable. "Big budget, big *kotong*, big *kurakot*," she smirks.

The government spends P2.7 billion a year just to collect the garbage of Metro Manila, and P3 million for dumping fee.

For bioreactor

Another writer-environmentalist, Leonarda Camacho, has offered city and town officials one solution to the garbage problem: the construction of a hydromex machine, which treats toxic and hazardous wastes into neutral substances that can be made into hollow block, paint. The plant is much cheaper than the other waste-disposal means, non-burn, and has no emission or effluent.

"It is a permanent structure, and it would cost less than P50 million to construct," says Camacho. "In two months, the machine can be fabricated."

However, her word of counsel fell mostly on deaf ears. So far, only Quezon City has built such a plant, which will start operating in a week.

The Department of Science and Technology has also developed a bioreactor that, using enzymes or organisms, processes food, animal and garden wastes into compost, and converts them into soil conditioner, fertilizer, charcoal. It can process ½ ton of organic wastes every three days.

There is only one bioreactor in Metro Manila, and it was built in 1992 yet. There has been no taker from the local governments since.

"*E, ayaw nila, e,*" Camacho says in exasperation.

The logic behind, of course, is that certain people wouldn't make as much money as they do now if a permanent solution to the garbage problem is in place.

The ideal time for making money, says a Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism report, is "when a full-blown problem of garbage piling up in the streets gives rise to a solution that calls on local governments to hire and hire more trucks and make more trips." As it is now.

(To be concluded)

Erap, Danny Ildefonso hazardous to health

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

(MISSING ERAP: The *masa*, no doubt, sorely missed the fabulous Erap jokes that enjoyed stellar rating both in text messages and in side streets, until the Impeachment Trial was suddenly stopped. Call this a leftover or a sequel. Yesterday morning on a street in Mandaluyong, Rico de la Cruz announced with a naughty smile that Erap has started going around to express his deep gratitude to the people, for what we don't know. " Thanks for the MILLIONS," Erap told a big crowd that included First Wife Loi. The audience, naturally, was stunned after hearing about the hidden millions right from the horse's mouth. Whereupon Loi, similarly surprised, stood up and nudged her deposed husband hard on the fat side. Finally realizing the all-revealing slip, Rico said Erap promptly corrected himself: "*Ehe*, thanks a MILLIONS *pala*."....He's against the ropes but, when last seen, Erap Estrada was throwing hefty punches at President Gloria Arroyo. Erap has, in fact, called Gloria a usurper, an unforgivable slur no matter how you spell it. Well, we never thought Erap had the makings of a fine boxer. He's supposed to be down but the guy has obviously put President Macagal on the defensive. We can all expect Erap to keep on punching, desperately and hard. Unless, of course, President Gloria follows what Teddy Benigno, a seasoned fighter, has advised her to do: have Estrada arrested immediately on plunder charges, tried, jailed, etc. In the first place, Mr. Benigno pointed out, it's not Erap's call, it's Gloria's duty to put Estrada where he belongs. Show the nation you've the guts and conviction of a strong leader, Gloria was told. Last seen, the President was flashing that sweet, carefree toothpaste ad smile.)

* * *

WHO says you have to be a President, elected by more than 10 million voters, in order to be an instant multi-millionaire?

The way they elevate players to superstardom in the Philippine Basketball Association, a street kid need not dream of becoming an actor to later star in an impeachment telenovela in order to rake in millions.

You have, of course, heard of Danny Ildefonso, Kenneth Duremdes and all the other star players who have become members of the PBA Multi-millionaires Club.

I am 120 percent for this practice of paying our local basketball pros as much as the competing PBA companies can hack it.

Problem is, the PBA itself clearly cannot afford the wild practice.

And I must salute PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino for tinkering with house rules in order to nip that P96-million deal which Ildefonso had tried to ink with Tanduay.

It was PBA's way of saying that, sorry folks, enough is enough.

* * *

We'll get to that later.

In the meanwhile, let's give way to this concerned reader who sincerely feels that the ever-growing list of instant multi-millionaires in the PBA is, just like Erap Estrada, hazardous to the nation's health.

"It's a silly, deadly mismatch, the skyrocketing salaries of players in the PBA compared to the take-home pay of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos," protests Allan P. Dimalanta, a Metro Manilan who identifies himself as a classmate of one of my three sons at St. John's Academy in San Juan.

He continues: "I find it unjust for a company to throw away millions for the pay and bonuses of basketball players while majority of the labor sector, that includes rightful degree holders, struggle and have to survive on a measly income. This is a clear case of inequity in the distribution of wealth in our country. It's just too much."

The new government, demands Mr. Dimalanta, must address the problem. Right away.

While millions, he says, never get the salaries and credit for working their butts off, management is pampering these players like pagan gods. The new government must make a move. The supervising sports bodies, if any, must order the PBA to reconsider its requirements, mainly regarding salary caps.

* * *

The whole labor sector, he says, cannot just shut up and watch while this gross mismanagement continues to deprive the work force of what it rightfully deserves.

Not only that, he stresses that what's more disturbing is the fact that, while even undeserving players live a life of luxury, the malpractice sends a wrong signal to our youth that basketball is the only sure step to fame and fortune. There has got to be an emphasis on proper education.

"I do like to play basketball," Mr. Dimalanta cries, "but I still insist and believe that education is a must and equity is essential if the Filipino is to preserve his values."

The malpractice now going on in the sports sector, he says, is slowly but surely killing the most important element of our economy: the work force.

He says he's challenging others to sound a similar wake-up call to the PBA, team management, other sports bodies and, most importantly, the militant labor groups.

* * *

Well, the first thing to ask really is: Does Danny Ildefonso sincerely believe he's worth every peso of what had been offered to him by Tanduay?

If he says yes, Ildefonso and his gang should be made to undergo a self-evaluation test.

For a first question: Where does the Filipino cager stand in the Asian basketball circuit now?

You need not dig and inquire to conclude that the Filipino cager, once regarded as the Prince of Asian basketball, has become a favorite whipping boy of touted teams like China and South Korea.

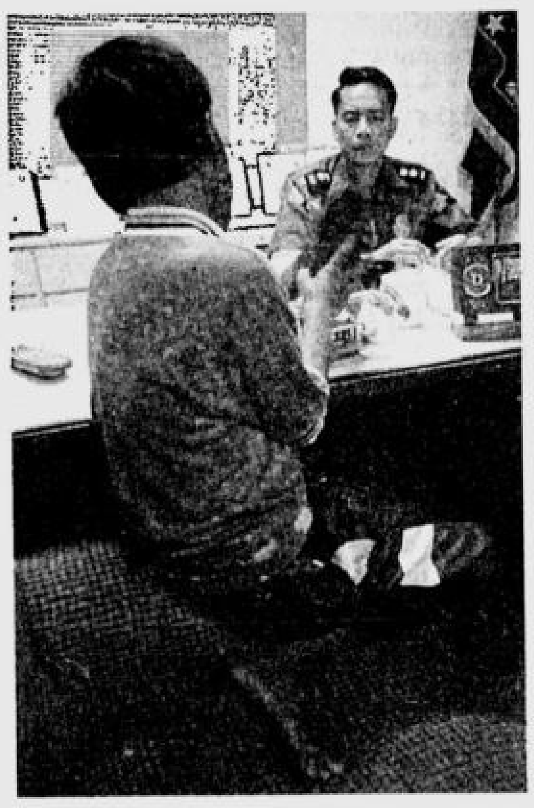
In short, these players must be made to show credentials that can honestly support their incredible price tags.

Now, it will be hard for the PBA to admit this. But Ildefonso & Co. ended up wearing those artificial labels because, after the dismal failure to produce a competitive brand of international basketball here, the game itself has been reduced to an ugly price tag war.

There's no longer a foolproof system to determine a PBA star's true worth.

Unfortunately, Danny Ildefonso himself is too young to shake his head and say, "Sorry, enough is enough."

Danny I. is, just like Erap Estrada, only human, you know.



ANOTHER BOY, ANOTHER 'CRIME'

Taguig's Col. Artemio Bermido questions a 9-year-old boy who was caught driving a stolen car on Wednesday. A photo of the boy watching TV was wrongly used with the story of another 9-year-old boy who was caught delivering shabu for two men and a woman in Quezon City. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Ex-actor in hot water

By TJ Burgonio

FORMER actor-turned-policeman Jovit Moya has also turned into a controversial figure at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) after he was criticized for allegedly throwing his weight around.

Currently the aide of airport general manager Edgardo Manda, Moya was accused of breaching airport security procedures when he allegedly drove past a checkpoint on a perimeter road linking Naia and the Villamor Air Base Sunday night.

A police report showed that Moya who was in one of two vehicles, a Nissan Patrol and a Mitsubishi Strada, ignored a signal to stop at a checkpoint at the 505th control point heading straight to the ramp area.

The report said that despite a prior warning and signal, the "vehicles did not yield to SOP control point procedures, ran down the chain barricade and then went on to proceed to the IPT ramp area."

Moya was seated beside the driver of the Nissan Patrol car, according to the report.

Airport security officers drove after the vehicle and caught up with it at the airport dignitaries lounge but changed their mind about arresting the driver and Moya when they learned that Manda was on board, the report said.

The two vehicles had reportedly come from the Villamor Air Base, headquarters of the Philippine Air Force.

Manda could not be reached for comment, and Moya denied the report.

"There's no such incident," Moya said. "That's impossible."

But airport officials denied that Manda was on board the Nissan Patrol car when the incident happened. One of the officials said Manda would not have allowed the incident to happen.

Moya, a former teeny bop idol and member of the cast of the TV show "That's Entertainment", played character roles in movies before he became a policeman.

He first figured in a controversy at the Naia when he supposedly berated two security guards for flagging down his vehicle for a routine inspection at the entrance of the Naia administration building last month.

He reportedly threatened to run over the guards if they stopped him again.

Cop kills himself after wife learns of his affair

A ROOKIE Valenzuela policeman killed himself on Wednesday after his wife found out he was having an affair with another woman.

PO1 Nestor Besa Jr., 28, of the Northern Police District Mobile Force, shot himself in the head inside his house on Bonifacio Street, Canumay East, Valenzuela at about 11 p.m. Wednesday, investigators said.

According to SPO4 Arthur Quiñonez of the Valenzuela Police Investigation Bureau, a woman earlier approached the policeman's wife Gilda, claiming she was Besa's mistress.

Gilda, Besa's wife of three years, went home and waited for her husband. When he arrived, she confronted him. The policeman admitted he had a mistress and asked his wife to forgive him, police said.

But Gilda refused to yield and angrily left the house to go to work, police said.

When Gilda returned late that evening, she saw her husband's body on the floor. His .38-caliber service revolver was in one hand and he had a bullet hole in the right temple, SPO4 Quiñonez said.

Christian V. Esguerra

Customs appointments lauded by retirees

THE PHILIPPINE Customs Retirees Association has lauded President Macapagal-Arroyo for the appointment of career officials Titus Villanueva and Ray Allas as customs commissioner and deputy commissioner for intelligence.

The group, led by its president, former Customs Deputy Commissioner Isauro Garcia, said the new appointments were in line with Ms Macapagal's policy of respecting the bureaucracy and civil service.

In a manifesto of support, the association suggested that the career development program be strictly adhered to in the bureau and that all positions from the lowest rank up to deputy commissioner must be classified as strictly career positions and their occupants removable only for cause in accordance with law.

Villanueva and Allas have pledged to minimize smuggling which was rampant during the ousted Estrada administration.

Asistio: Santiago . . .

(From page A21)

Jr. who described the neophyte candidate as foolish for running under the ticket of Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo in the May elections.

Asistio said he was sorry for Santiago.

"He doesn't know what he has gotten himself into," Asistio said. "He should not have joined Malonzo who has a bad record in Caloocan."

But Santiago said he would never join Asistio, whose clan he described to have long been identified with syndicates and the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

A veteran street parliamentarian, Santiago was among the key personalities in the militant movement that helped topple the Estrada administration.

Asistio said Malonzo, his fierce rival, is only using the popularity of Santiago to boost his chances of winning a third and last term.

"In an election, the mayor should carry his councilors," Asistio said. "But with Santiago, he would be the one carrying Malonzo. If Santiago really has principles, I strongly suggest that he jump ship now. It's not yet late."

But Santiago said Asistio "doesn't deserve any support from decent residents who experienced the governance of the Asistios for many years. I can't imagine myself joining him."

A member of the party list group Bayan Muna, Santiago will run as guest candidate of Malonzo's group.

He clarified that his alliance with Malonzo is only grounded on his group's commitment to prevent Estrada cronies, such as the Asistios, from assuming public office.

"I will always remain an advocate of the sectors of labor, urban poor, the youth, and the small and medium entrepreneurs," he said. "They will be the priority if ever I'm elected into office."

But Asistio pointed out that Santiago is not running for president. "He's only running for councilor so how can he fulfill all these promises? Is he dreaming?"

Santiago said his group initially wanted him to run as representative of the second district of Caloocan. But he instead accepted Malonzo's offer for a seat in the city council since he still does not have the political machinery three months before the elections.

Bagatsing . . .

(From page A21)

Bagatsing, a Manila representative for 11 years, said he would run under the banner of the United Opposition, recently renamed as the People Power Coalition (PPC).

"I will return to join the race and recover the chance I was deprived of in 1998," Bagatsing said in a news conference in Ermita. "I won't agree to be second."

He was apparently alluding to his old claim that he was the real winner in the 1998 mayoral race when he ran against current Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, whom he accused of cheating.

Bagatsing said the PPC national leadership only gave Lopez the blanket authority to form the coalition's official lineup for May on the understanding that Bagatsing would lead the ticket.

Roads closed

FOR the 56th anniversary and 7th foundation day celebration of Mandaluyong City today, Gen. Kalentong Street and Maysilo Circle will be closed in the afternoon to give way to a parade that starts at 2 p.m.

Motorists are advised to avoid Kalentong and Maysilo Circle. Motorists from Makati going to Sta. Ana are advised to take Makati Avenue. Those from Punta going to Edsa should take Mabini, J. Rizal and P. Cruz to Shaw Boulevard.

Ateneo officials . . .

(From page A21)

junior prom.

"There were 12 Junior's Level officers on duty that evening," Mirella Clarete, PTA level representative, said in a letter to the Inquirer. "Duke and his partner were never apart.

Clarete disputed the police explanation of Pizarro's suicide, saying this makes the boy's date appear like "she is an irresponsible teenager."

"On the contrary, she is a highly responsible student and an obedient daughter who is dedicated to her studies, school activities and parents," Clarete said. "She never once snubbed (Pizarro) during our prom. We were there, and believe me, we watched our girls very closely."

She insisted that Pizarro's partner "had nothing to do with his suicide. We stand by our conviction that nothing she did that night justified (Pizarro's) actions."

Police are now blaming Pizarro's death on depression, but they are not sure what particular event led him to kill himself.

On Feb. 5, the day the story about Pizarro's suicide came out in the Inquirer, the case investigator told this reporter that young man's father scolded him and he said the angle of the story was wrong.

The chief investigator yesterday showed notes that Pizarro allegedly made as early October 2000 which expressed sadness and emotional pain. In the notes, Pizarro said goodbye and thank you to each of his friends. He also said his body should not be taken to Ateneo.

He also expressed his wish to have a gun. His father later told investigators that he did not know where the gun that the boy used came from.

The father of Pizarro's date also said the girl "did not dance with anybody but Duke that night. The more than 200 people who were there can attest to that."

The unidentified father added in an e-mail sent to the Inquirer on Wednesday, "My daughter is taking it all too hard. She is so depressed. "My daughter is not the reason why (Pizarro) committed suicide," the father stressed.

Floods an issue in San Pedro polls

ENVIRONMENT advocates in San Pedro, Laguna will take local officials to task for the missing rivers and natural waterways which, environmentalists claimed, have caused massive flooding in the province.

Ray L. Junia, chair of San Pedro Muna (SPM) Movement, yesterday vowed to raise the issue in the coming polls and make the local officials account for the missing waterways.

Junia said most of San Pedro lay underwater after the last big rain, all because of the missing waterways.

"The flash floods were the kind never seen before in the town, catching by surprise many families who had to leave their homes," he said.

The SPM conducted an investigation and learned that many natural waterways in San Pedro have gone missing while many others have been reduced to mere "culverts."

The group, which described the situation as "criminal," accused developers of grabbing the waterways and turning them into residential properties.

The group said that apartments and houses now stand on what used to be waterways.

The SPM is taking a strong stand on the environment in the coming elections. The group has tied up with PDP-Laban and would field candidates in the coming elections.

Junia himself is being endorsed to run for vice mayor and is said to be the only candidate from the town's migrants sector.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, February 9, 2001
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: **Gen 3:1-8**
Gospel: **Mk 7:31-37**

Again Jesus set out; from the country of Tyre, passed through Sidon and, skirting the sea of Galilee, he came to the territory of Decapolis. There a deaf man who also had difficulty in speaking was brought to him. They asked Jesus to lay his hand upon him.

Jesus took him apart from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then, looking up to heaven, he groaned and said to him, "Ephphetha," that is, "Be opened."

And his ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak clearly. Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone, but the more he insisted on this, the more they proclaimed it. The people were completely astonished and said, "He has done all things well; he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

Commentary:

"Jesus took him (the deaf-mute) apart from the crowd." In three different ways—short of redundancy—Mark emphasizes the privacy that Jesus reserves for the deaf-mute in the process of healing. People who have been through the trauma of extreme emotional pain often withdraw in silence. They shut themselves off and nurse very deep wounds in their souls. Only the one who can win the trust of the traumatized individual and assure him/her of privacy and confidentiality, can open their mouth and get them to talk and speak their heart our all over again. The opening up is itself already the beginning of healing.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (PROPERTY)—Notice of sale to co-owners—Under Art. 484 of the Civil Code, there is co-ownership whenever the ownership of an undivided thing or right belongs to different persons. There is no co-ownership when the different portions owned by different people are already concretely determined and separately identifiable, even if not yet technically described. Co-owners with actual notice of the sale are not entitled to written notice. A written notice is a formal requisite to make certain that the co-owners have actual notice of the sale to enable them to exercise their right of redemption within the limited period of thirty days. But where the co-owners had actual notice of the sale at the time thereof and/or afterwards, a written notice of a fact already known to them, would be superfluous. The statute does not demand what is unnecessary. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, Spouses Si v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 122047, October 12, 2000]

Digest by R.B. Vera

PADILLA. Performing at the Araneta Coliseum for the third year in a row.

The shape Zsa Zsa wants to be in

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

WHAT **does Zsa Zsa Padilla** want?

Time and again, Zsa Zsa has been vocal about getting her annulment and marrying her long-time live-in partner, **Dolphy**. And she vows to make the first step this year, after 12 years of being separated from her first husband, dentist **Modesto Tatlonghari**.

"First I have to file for (annulment)," Zsa Zsa points out. "I haven't even filed, so if I really want to get married again, I have to work on my annulment first."

She also wants a better figure so she is now on an intensive diet to achieve a shapelier body.

Now on her sixth week of dieting, Zsa Zsa avoids rice or pasta, shuns everything fried and drinks only natural juices and a lot of water.

For breakfast, she only takes half of sandwich, slim-fast shake or Nesvita. To complement the diet, she does regular workouts at home.

"It's such a killer to go on a diet like this," Zsa Zsa attests. "But I'm comfortable with my figure now and I'd like to maintain it."

She describes herself, however, as a yo-yo dieter. "The minute I eat rice again, I can gain two pounds in a day. I've lost 11 pounds in the last five weeks and if I can maintain this figure, I'm okay."

Zsa Zsa wants to be busy this Valentine's season, like what she has always done in the past. She performs in "The Love Concert," with **Lani Misalucha** and Freestyle, on Feb. 14 at the Araneta Coliseum.

This is the third year in a row that Zsa Zsa is performing at the Big Dome on Valentine's Day. In 1999, she packed the cavernous venue when she performed with the Side A Band. Last year, she was with **Martin Nievera**.

This year's show will have a mostly pop repertoire. Zsa Zsa will also sing her signature hits in a medley. Musical director is **Louie Ocampo**. Stage director is **Rowell Santiago**.

On Feb. 11, Zsa Zsa will hold a dinner-concert at the Alabang Town Center.

Tintin acts!

AFTER bagging the grand prize in the Shanghai International Music Festival last year, singer **Tintin Arnaldo** tries her hand at acting, in a four-episode series on ABS-CBN's weekly suspense thriller, "Oka Tokat" (Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m.).

"This is my first attempt at acting and I'm excited about it," Tintin says. She is directed by actor-directors **Michael de Mesa** and **Rez Cortez**.

Apparently, ABS-CBN Talent Center wants to build up Tintin not just as a singer but also as an actress. She has been attending workshops to prepare her for her acting debut.

When she started as a singer, Tintin was really setting her sights on acting later on. Little did she know the opportunity would come this early.

"I grab every opportunity I get at ABS-CBN because with so many talents around, you always have to prove yourself," Tintin reasons out. "It's exhausting at times because of the late nights, but I enjoy what I do and that's the most important thing."

As a singer, Tintin's talent is showcased on the Sunday musical variety show "Asap," where she appears as a semi-regular talent.

She continues to be busy promoting her debut album from Star Records. Since the album was released in September, sales have been gradually picking up.

Her calendar is filled up with mall shows and

THE SHAPE/A24

ARNALDO. To sing classic tunes in a Valentine concert.

'PROOF OF LIFE'

Another rescue tale in a very familiar setting

By Emmie G. Velarde

REVIEW

ALTITUDE sickness haunts the impertinent.

Ever since I pulled mountain madness, its symptoms and prognosis—as "Vertical Limit" demonstrated—down to the level of health risks for daily commuters on Edsa, it has followed me like a spectre. On my next excursion to the movies, I found I had merely crossed over from New Zealand's Mt. Cook to the Andes in Ecuador.

"Proof of Life," like "Vertical Limit," is about a rescue, this time of a kidnap victim by a small tactical band of specialists. Aside from physical torment dealt by natural surroundings, the American engineer Simon Bowman, brilliantly played by David Morse ("The Green Mile," "ER"), is subjected to cruelty by captors so crude and doped up a worse type may be difficult to come by.

The movie was genuinely suffering from clinical confusion in some of the scenes, or Morse is a hatefully clever actor.

I cannot decide which of the two movies depicts conditions that are more extreme, but it shouldn't be hard to imagine why I found this one after my own heart more than the other. Ecuador, the "host" country is described as "third-world poor, politically troubled, unpredictable and corrupt, but spectacularly beautiful, and home to one of the most peace-loving peoples in the world." Ring a bell?

The words are borrowed from Washington-based journalist William Prochnau, author of a magazine article that is one of two manuscripts on which "Proof of Life" is based. Prochnau accompanied cast and crew to Ecuador for 52 days, during which he witnessed "a tragic death (Morse's stand-in), muggings, a stabbing attack, two cases of debilitating tropical diseases, and hardened pros falling like flies (at least 20 people left production)."

In his subsequent report on the trek, he noted wryly that Director Taylor Hackford ("An Officer and a Gentleman," "Dolores Claiborne," and "The Devil's Advocate)" "had picked one of the rainiest weeks in history to come to his mountain."

Mishaps

Lead actor Russell Crowe ("LA Confidential," "The Insider," "Gladiator") after a storm, a few mudslides, and a lot of delays, was heard mumbling: "We could have made this in a city park."

Alonso Alegria, Latin American casting director: "No movie is worth this."

Morse, ever the deadpan comic: "I could live here."

Wait, there's more. Prochnau reported that, during the filming, two of Ecuador's 30 volcanoes started smoking, and real kidnappers took hostage a dozen people, half of them foreigners.

A few weeks later, American Indians marched down from the mountains to the capital Quito and demanded the president's resignation. The president resigned, the Army sent the Indians back home, and the vice president took over within 24 hours. Too much, huh?

Do these mishaps make a good movie? No. The movie is quite superb on its own, thank you, with a setting, a story, and stars guaranteed to make Metro Manila box-offices hum soundly for more than two weeks.

Example: The kidnappers' mountain hideaway is several hundred meters above a 13,000-feet-high pass through the Andes to the headwaters of the Amazon, from which are visible distant peaks known as "Avenue of Volcanoes." Thousands of feet below nestle sparkling alpine lakes.

LOVERS on screen and in real life, Crowe and Ryan survive extreme conditions.

Tired strain

"Proof of Life" is an SOP term used during negotiations for kidnap-and-ransom, which has apparently become big business in Central America.

Hackford says that in terms of the movie, "proof of life" means more than a snapshot of the hostage holding a current newspaper. "It is also about people who have been stalled emotionally."

And so, cutting through the main plot is a love story on a tired strain, yes, but one that still works wonders: wife of kidnap victim and the man she hires to negotiate her husband's release are drawn to each other like bruise and balm.

The attraction between the actors Meg Ryan (all of Manila can recite her filmography, right?) as Mrs. Bowman and New Zealand-born Crowe as the negotiator is riveting. If I hadn't previously read about the offscreen romance, I'd have guessed anyway.

As for the action factor: Maximus the Gladiator resurrects as a kidnap-and-ransom specialist with a penchant for going right in there

ANOTHER/ A24

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GMA Love Stories

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ang bagong saturday formula
- IDOL KO SI KAP 7:00 PM new timeslot
- KAKABAKABA 8:00 PM new timeslot
- GMA'S BEST 9:00 PM

IDOL KO si KAP

SA LINGGO FEB 11
ang bagong sunday formula
- BITOY'S WORLD 7:00 PM new show
- GMA TELESINE 7:30 PM new show
- SUNDAY NIGHT BOX OFFICE 9:30 PM

BITOY'S WORLD

TELESINE

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6	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SYOTA NG BAYAN
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5	DOLBY SURROUND	THE CONTENDER
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7	DOLBY DIGITAL	VERTICAL LIMIT
8	DOLBY SURROUND	BOUNCE
9	DOLBY SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
10	DOLBY SURROUND	SYOTANG BAYAN
11	DOLBY SURROUND	TABI TABI PO
12	DOLBY SURROUND	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN MO

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6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	DUDE
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8	DOLBY SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA
9	DOLBY SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
10	DOLBY SURROUND	TABI TABI PO
11	DOLBY SURROUND	BOOBA
12	DOLBY SURROUND	WHAT WOMEN WANT

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2	DOLBY SURROUND	WHAT WOMEN WANT
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6	DOLBY SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

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2	DOLBY SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BOOBA
4	DOLBY SURROUND	IKA-7 GLORYA
5	DOLBY SURROUND	BOUNCE
6	DOLBY SURROUND	THE CONTENDER
7	DTS	PROOF OF LIFE
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	VERTICAL LIMIT
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALHIBONG PUSA
10	DOLBY SURROUND	SYOTA NG BAYAN
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	DUDE
12	DOLBY SURROUND	TABI TABI PO

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2	ULTRA SURROUND	BOOBA
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	PROOF OF LIFE
4	ULTRA SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
5	ULTRA SURROUND	TABI TABI PO
6	ULTRA SURROUND	SYOTA NG BAYAN
7	ULTRA SURROUND	BOUNCE
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	VERTICAL LIMIT
9	ULTRA SURROUND	WHAT WOMEN WANT
10	ULTRA SURROUND	THE CONTENDER

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2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TABI TABI PO

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	TABI TABI PO
2	ULTRA SURROUND	WHIPPED
3	ULTRA SURROUND	DUDE
4	ULTRA SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA
5	ULTRA SURROUND	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
6	ULTRA SURROUND	RED PLANET
7	DOLBY SURROUND	LITTLE NICKY

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1	ULTRA SURROUND	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	ULTRA SURROUND	MEET THE PARENTS
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7	ULTRA SURROUND	REMEMBER THE TITANS
8	ULTRA SURROUND	DUWAG LANG SUMUSUKO

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	VERTICAL LIMIT
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	DUDE
3	DOLBY SURROUND	BOOBA
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SYOTA NG BAYAN
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TABI TABI PO
6	DOLBY SURROUND	WHAT WOMEN WANT

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5 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE CONTENDER
6 GOLD (SDDS)	CLOSED
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9 [illegible]	BOOBA
10 [illegible]	VITAL PARTS

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4	
5	
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5	VITAL PARTS

Metropolis
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4	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
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8 (SDDS)	VITAL PARTS
9 (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT

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3	PROOF OF LIFE
4	VITAL PART
5	
6	

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2	VITAL PART
3	IKA-7 GLORYA
4 (SDDS)	VIRGIN WIFE
5	BOOBA
6 (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
7 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE
8	TABI TABI PO
9	BOUNCE

Commonwealth
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1 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE
2	IKA-7 GLORYA
3	TABI TABI PO
4	BOUNCE
5 (SDDS)	VIRGIN WIFE
6	BOOBA
7 (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
8	SYOTA NG BAYAN

Ortigas
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1	BOOBA
2	BOUNCE
3 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE
4	SYOTA NG BAYAN
5 (SDDS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
6 (DOLBY)	VIRGIN WIFE
7 (DOLBY)	IKA-7 GLORYA

Universal
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Lords	TABI TABI PO
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1	IKA-7 GLORYA
2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	VIRGIN WIFE
4	SYOTA NG BAYAN

Prima
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1	
3	IKA-7 GLORYA

Super Cinerama
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1	PROOF OF LIFE
2	VIRGIN WIFE
3	BOUNCE
4	SYOTA NG BAYAN
5	VERTICAL LIMIT

Divisoria Mall
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1	VIRGIN WIFE
2	IKA-7 GLORYA
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN MO
4	TABI TABI PO
5	SYOTA NG BAYAN
6	PROOF OF LIFE

Baclaran LRT Cinema
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1	VIRGIN WIFE
2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	IKA-7 GLORYA

CINEMA 2000

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2	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN MO
3 (DTS)	VITAL PARTS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2 (DTS)	VITAL PARTS
3 (DOLBY)	PROOF OF LIFE
4	VIRGIN WIFE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	VIRGIN WIFE
2	VITAL PARTS
3	SYOTA NG BAYAN
4 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE

Lianas MovieCity
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1 (DOLBY)	VITAL PARTS
2	VIRGIN WIFE
3 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE
4	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN MO
5	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
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1	VIRGIN WIFE
2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	VITAL PARTS

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2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	VITAL PARTS

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2	SYOTA NG BAYAN
3	TABI TABI PO

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2	VERTICAL LIMIT
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN MO

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2	IKA-7 GLORYA
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2	PROOF OF LIFE
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4	TABI TABI PO

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2	BOOBA
3	VIRGIN WIFE
4	VERTICAL LIMIT

Jade Cinema
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Another rescue. . . (From page A23)

with the wolves, carrying the money, and personally claiming his merchandise. What dirty hombre stands a chance? The warrior Maximus was fearless, stalwart, and brilliant. Thorne is no less. Maximus didn't get the girl. I am not surprised that neither does Thorne.

Why Crowe

The other manuscript that "Proof of Life" is based on is the book "Long March to Freedom," a first-person account by a kidnapping victim of narco-guerillas. The writers insist that, "as compelling as this story was," the movie is not a reproduction. Meaning, the love angle on paper was supposed to be entirely fictional. Do I dare blame Ryan?

Crowe, hailed in Hollywood as the "new Bond," has more than 25 websites devoted to him (official site: 30 Odd Foot of Grunts, or www.gruntland.com, devoted to his rock band). Now I know why. To think that he was third choice for the role (studio bosses first wanted Mel Gibson, and then Harrison Ford).

Hackford says he had argued for the 36-year-old star even before "The Insider" and "Gladiator" hit theaters and made history. Precious, precious Ryan—she was paid $15 million for this, her highest to date, allegedly more than three quarters of production expenses on location for 16 weeks—had to step in to announce, "I want to act with him."

Now I know why, too. Yes, that's exactly what I mean.

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DOLBY dts SDDS

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	VITAL PARTS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	WHAT WOMAN WANT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	BOUNCE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	PROOF OF LIFE
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	IKA-7 GLORYA
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	VIRGIN WIFE
MIRAMAR	GUSTO KO LANG LUMIGAYA / LA FEMME EROTIQUE
ODEON	PROOF OF LIFE
ODEON-2	VIRGIN WIFE
ROBEN	VIRGIN WIFE
TANDEM-1	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
TANDEM-2	PALIGAYAHIN MO AKO
TIMES	BEDAZZLED / THE WATCHER
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	ANAK NG YAKUSA
ACT-2	ANAK NG KANO
ACT-3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
ACT-4	TURN ON
CORONET-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
QUEZON-1	VIRGIN WIFE
REMAR	VIRGIN WIFE
REMAR-2	SYOTA NG BAYAN
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	IKA-7 GLORYA
OCEAN CINEMA-A	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN MO
OCEAN CINEMA-B	BUKID AY BASA
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	PROOF OF LIFE
CINEMA-2	BOUNCE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
CINEMA-2	VIRGIN WIFE
CINEMA-3	BOOBA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	IKA-7 GLORYA
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-6	BALAHIBONG PUSA
CINEMA-7	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
CINEMA-8	TABI TABI PO
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WHAT WOMEN WANT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-12	THE CONTENDER
CINEMA-14	VITAL PARTS
CINEMA-15	BOUNCE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
CINEMA-3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN MO
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	BOUNCE
CINEMA-2	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-3	BOUNCE
CINEMA-4	PROOF OF LIFE
CINEMA-5	CONTENDER
CINEMA-6	WHAT WOMEN WANT

The. . .

(From page A23)

out-of-town performances. She is also doing a nationwide tour with the South Border.

On Feb. 13, she will share the stage with **Eugene Villaluz**, harpist **Tadao Hayashi**, **Jimmy Bondoc** and the Essence Band in the concert "Forever Love" at Dusit Hotel Nikko Grand Ballroom.

Tintin will sing classic tunes to the accompaniment of Hayashi's harp. She will also do the hit duet "Nothing I Want More" with Eugene Villaluz (who originally recorded it with **Louie Reyes**).

Tintin will wear a gown by **Blas Aligno** and her makeup will be done by **Mario Alondra**. **David Fabros** directs the show. Musical director is Jimmy Bondoc.

Even with her show biz commitments, Tintin hopes to finish her mass communications degree in October.

"I am working on my thesis now so I can accommodate more singing offers," she says. "I don't have to go to school every day, so I can focus on my career.

"Three years ago, I chose to prioritize my studies. I don't regret doing that. Now that I'm finally given a chance to make a name for myself, I want to do good."

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: How sure are you, sir, that violence will not erupt at the rally?

Official: Oh, don't worry, we have provided a lot of security—security by police, police trainees and even some criminal students!

(Gee, that's so reassuring!)

* * *

Field reporter: After the flag ceremony, our new president will have a Cabinet meeting.

Anchorperson in studio: Uh, Cabinet meeting?

Field Reporter: Ah, yes, there will be no Cabinet meeting, because there is no Cabinet yet!

(Wheee!)

* * *

Host: How can we help our young people get a strong values system again?

Guest: We have to give them good role models—like our national heroes. They have to remember—

Host: How do we do that?

Guest: For example, the lives of our heroes can be embedded in our school curriculum!

(Duh...)

* * *

Host: How do you like our new president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo?

Guest: Ok *siya—masustansiya ang kanyang pananalita kasi* economy *siya, e!*

(Huh?)

* * *

Field Reporter: *Ano ho ba ang prublema?*

Janitor: *Gusto kong magreklamo sa ginawa sa akin ng mga tauhan ni* Mayor!

Field Reporter: *Ano ho'ng ginawa —?*

Janitor: *Nananaagan ho ako kay* President Joseph Estrada!—

Field Reporter: *Hindi na ho siya ang presidente—si* Arroyo *na!*

Janitor: *Nananawagan ako kay* Mayor Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo!

(*Ang gulo mo!*)

* * *

Quiz show host: Are you ready for your question?

Contestant: Ready.

Quiz show host: Ok, here's the question? How many croissants are there in the alphabet?

(*Ano daw?!*)

* * *

Host: What can you say about the sermons you hear in church these days?

Guest: They are so out-of-touch!

Host: What improvements do you want to see?

Guest: For one thing, use words that are simple and easy to understand. A good sermon does not have to be high-polluting!

(That's verbal pollution, right?)

* * *

Host of Asian cable show: What can you make of this latest development in the Philippines?

Cohost: It's a repetition of the fight in the 1980s against the oppressive regime of then president Fidel Marcos!

(See, even foreign TV people make booboos, too!)

TV treats

SUNDAY, Feb. 11 at 5 p.m. on Star Movies: "Star Kids' Club" presents "The Journey of Natty Gann" starring **Meredith Salenger** and **John Cusack** (with replays on Feb. 16 and 21). **Natty Gann** is a 12-year-old Depression-era girl who runs away from her guardian to look for her dad, who's gone to Washington to look for work in the timber industry. She is befriended by a wolf, hops on a freight train, and is presumed dead after the train crashes—but she survives and experiences other misadventures until she completes her journey.

At 9 p.m. on Star Movies, "10 Things I Hate About You." A young woman is not allowed to date unless her boy-hating older sister gets a suitor of her own. In an attempt to win her, a potential boyfriend tries to set the older sister up with another rebel who may just be able to win her heart. Stars include **Heath Ledger, Julia Stiles, Larisa Oleynik** and **Joseph Gordon-Levitt** (with replays on Feb. 12 and 17).

SHOWING TODAY AT SM ILOILO CINEMA 9

8th Pelikula at Lipunan 2001

at 9am
Pioneer Ilonggo Films
at 11am
Shower
at 3pm
Pioneer Ilonggo Films
at 5pm
Gumising Ka Maruja

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Today at 1pm
MFI SHORT FILM CLASSICS!
A compilation of acclaimed Short Films from renowned filmmakers like Nick Deocampo, Nonoy Dadivas, Roxlee, Robert Quebral and more!

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GAY AND LESBIAN DOCUMENATRIES
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1 BOUNCE - P13 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15	2 VERTICAL LIMIT - P13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	3 BOUNCE - P13 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
4 PROOF OF LIFE - P13 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00	5 THE CONTENDER - P13 1:15, 3:50, 6:25, 9:00	6 WHAT WOMEN WANT - P13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00, 11:20

MATINEE P30.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

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ARTFILM GLORIETTA 4
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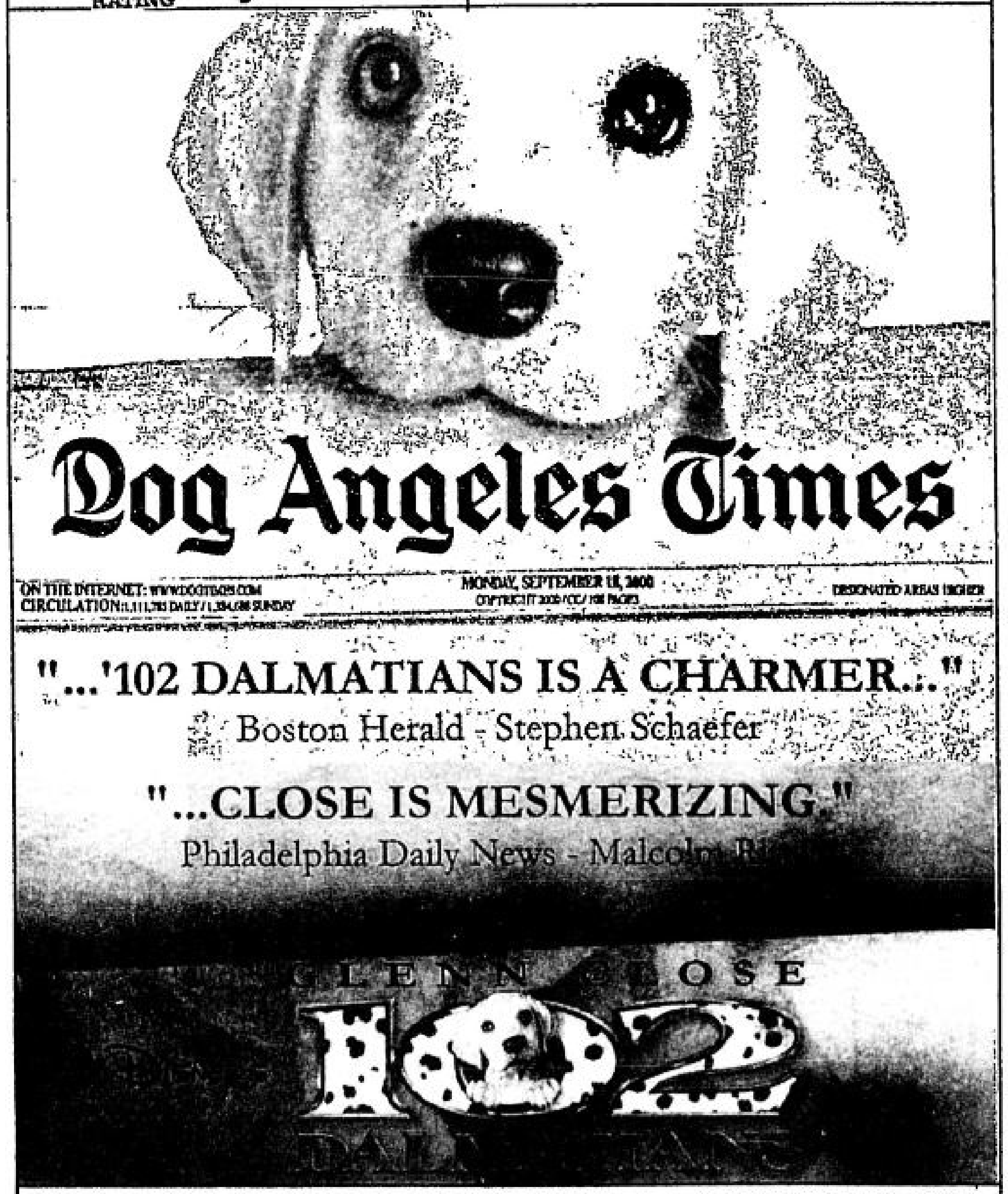
Splendor
Kathleen Robertson · Johnathon Schaech · Matt Keesler

"Beverly Hills 90210" star Robertson is Veronica, a young woman who suddenly kickstarts her lovelife when she falls for novelist Abel (Shaech) and drummer Zed (Keeslar) on the same night. They decide to try an unconventional arrangement in which they all live together.

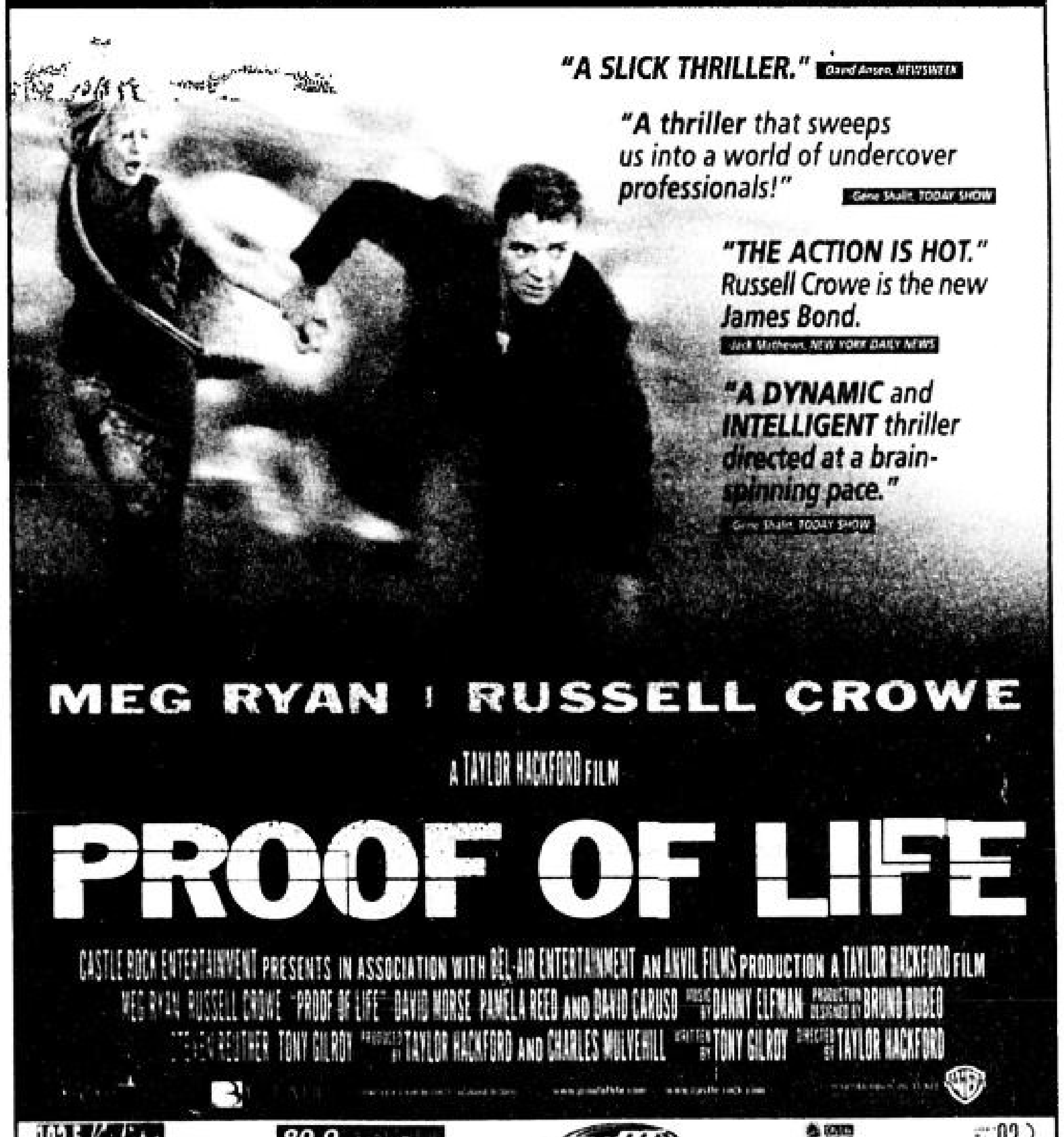
OFFICIAL SELECTION 1999 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

THEY'RE BACK! AND THEY'RE MORE!
SPOT-ON FUN FOR ALL AGES OPENS IN CINEMAS FEB. 14
MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage · ALL AGES ADMITTED


Dog Angeles Times
ON THE INTERNET: WWW.DOGTIMES.COM
CIRCULATION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2000
GLENN CLOSE
102 DALMATIANS

"...'102 DALMATIANS IS A CHARMER..."
Boston Herald - Stephen Schaefer
"...CLOSE IS MESMERIZING."
Philadelphia Daily News - Malcolm R
Distributed by BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL thru COLUMBIA PICTURES

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
"★★★★ Ryan and Crowe SIZZLE onscreen!" -Victoria Snee, KDAF-TV (DALLAS)


"A SLICK THRILLER." David Ansen, NEWSWEEK
"A thriller that sweeps us into a world of undercover professionals!" Gene Shalit, TODAY SHOW
"THE ACTION IS HOT." Russell Crowe is the new James Bond. Jack Mathews, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
"A DYNAMIC and INTELLIGENT thriller directed at a brain-spinning pace." Gene Shalit, TODAY SHOW
MEG RYAN · RUSSELL CROWE
A TAYLOR HACKFORD FILM
PROOF OF LIFE
CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BEL-AIR ENTERTAINMENT AN ANVIL FILMS PRODUCTION A TAYLOR HACKFORD FILM
MEG RYAN RUSSELL CROWE "PROOF OF LIFE" DAVID MORSE PAMELA REED AND DAVID CARUSO MUSIC BY DANNY ELFMAN PRODUCTION DESIGNED BY BRUNO RUBEO
STEVEN REUTHER TONY GILROY PRODUCED BY TAYLOR HACKFORD AND CHARLES MULVEHILL WRITTEN BY TONY GILROY DIRECTED BY TAYLOR HACKFORD
89.9 ALL HITS, ALWAYS
88.3
92.3

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SAMA NA SA RALLY NG ENGKANTO AT MALIGNO!
NOW SHOWING!
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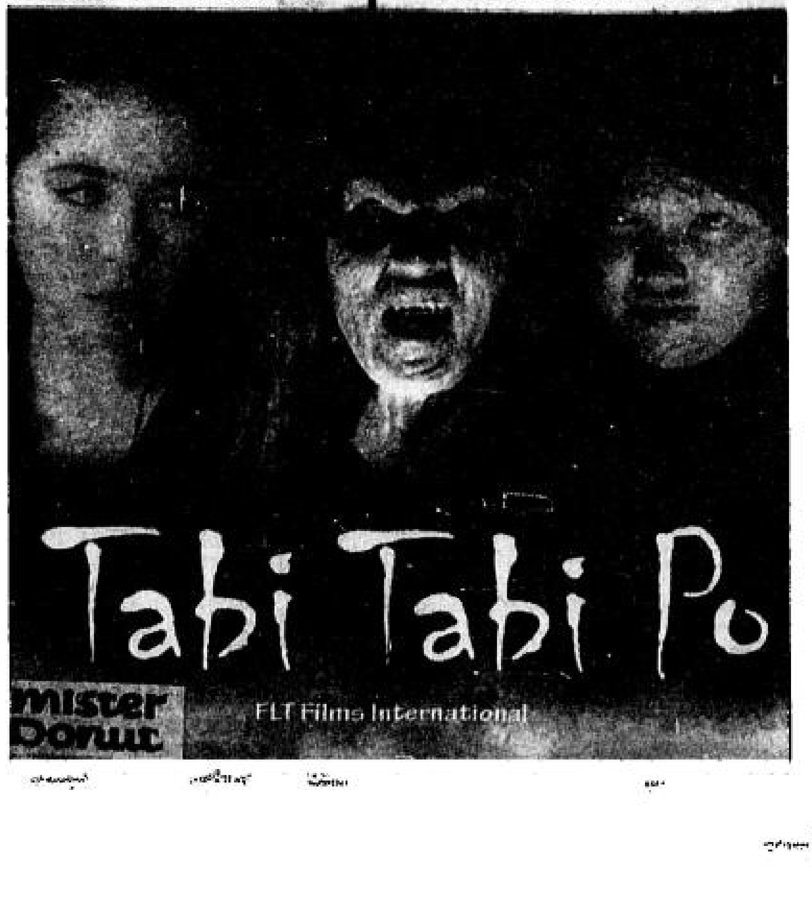
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OPENS TODAY
SEE HER... FEEL... BEWARE... HANDLE WITH CARE! Meet the LOVE GODDESS, PIEL MORENA at the following SM Cinemas today.
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MTRCB RATING ▶ R RESTRICTED · STRICTLY FOR ADULTS · No one below 18 yrs. old may be admitted.
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Piel Morena
FRAGILE !
HANDLE WITH CARE !!!
The Virgin Wife
Photographed by Romy Vitug
Written and Directed by Jose N. Carreon
Films International

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

The movie was disappointing, but the seats were great

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

I FINALLY got to watch a movie in Greenbelt's newly refurbished theaters. Last Sunday, I saw "What Women Want."

The movie didn't live up to the wit displayed on its trailer. It was slow-paced, although **Helen Hunt** gave an excellent, multi-layered performance and **Mel Gibson** exhibited his consistent comic-timing and fabulous dancing skills.

I felt that all the comedic highlights of "What Women Want" was already showcased in its trailer. And there were several scenes and one additional back story that were tacked on as emotional manipulation (the almost suicidal mousy, messenger girl) and that slowed down the movie's storytelling flow.

The movie may not have been as great as what I had expected, but Greenbelt's super-comfy theater seats are noteworthy and worth going back for again and again. Your back leans comfortably, you neck gets maximum support, and the seats are cushioned just right, firm but still relaxingly body-contouring.

Greenbelt was the place to go for movies during my Colegio de San Agustin high school days, and thank goodness Ayala spent a bundle to renovate and digitalize the cinemas. (A plus is that Odyssey Record Bar is situated beside the theaters, so you can check out the latest album releases before watching a movie).

I've stated this time and again and I'm saying it again: For watching movies, nothing beats watching them in the theater. And movie addicts like me can now rejoice because we can now choose from Louie's THX, Glorietta 4, Power Plant at Rockwell, and now Greenbelt.

* * *

Pops (Fernandez) and I caught the sneak peek of "102 Dalmatians" early Monday evening. I strongly recommend it for the entire family.

This is a fun movie, and will be involving for kids. Most importantly, the Disney lessons of compassion for animals, acceptance of those who are born different (in this movie, this lesson is represented by the Dalmatian puppy born without spots), and that evil never goes unpunished, are never hard-sell but will make a lasting impact on our youngsters.

The puppies are adorable, and the rainbow-hued parrot who thinks he's also a dog will be everybody's favorite. **Glenn Close** as **Cruella de Vil** is over the top in her evil schemes, and I applaud her dedication to her craft, because her costumes all had corsettes. Although they gave her such a tiny waist, it must have been excruciating to put them on and keep them on.

Cruella's comeuppance in the bakery assembly line finale, where she'll finally emerge as a candy-sprinkled, multi-tiered cake elicited many squeals of delight from the kids in the audience.

My one disappointment in the film is that **Gerard Depardieu,** as a French fur designer, is sadly underutilized. He wasn't given as much "playtime" as Glenn Close. Too bad because his character showed to much promise in equaling Cruella's antics!

* * *

Last Monday night, I stayed up beyond my normal bedtime to catch GMA-7's "I-Witness." The episode was titled "Kastilyong Buhangin in Erap" and it was an excellent and insightful dissertation on the former President's relationship with and effect on show business and its personalities.

Che Che Lazaro did a superb job of presenting the pro-Erap artists as well as the pro-Change artists (I hesitate to classify them as anti-Erap because most of those who were interviewed were progressive in thinking and were quite clear in their views that getting rid of one man won't change the entire system, that change ultimately comes from within.)

I have long been an admirer and a defender of now former MTRCB chair **Armida Siguion-Reyna.** I felt that she was poised, composed, intelligent, responsible and reasonable in the statements she made. I respect *Tita* Midz's candor and ability to stay true to herself. She never plays it safe, and she's prepared to have others disagree with her sentiments.

And *Tita* Midz humbly showed her emptied-out MTRCB desk drawers and office cabinets. That's genuine class, gracefully accepting when your tenure is through.

* * *

I've always felt that among our actor-politicians, Mayor **Rey Malonzo** of Caloocan City is one of the most under-estimated. He has always impressed me with his concise and articulate answers. He has appeared on my talk show many times, and he doesn't shy away from stating things exactly the way he sees them. I admire that in politicians, the ability to steer clear of double talk.

Mayor Malonzo gave a very good insight as to what it was like to be on the "least favored" list of the former President. And yet, he never gloated nor unnecessarily attacked former President Erap. That's what I call gentlemanly politics.

"I-Witness" succeeded because it never treated show business personalities in a condescending manner. Too often our role in society is belittled, and so many of the former President's weaknesses were attributed to his having been a product of showbusiness' "artificial world and misplaced values."

The stars, regardless of their chosen stands, were never presented as intellectual lightweights. I was glued to the entire episode because of the respect that was given to the members of the industry that I am proud to be a part of.

I'm not normally jealous of what others are able to produce and present, but this is one instance when I truly wished I were the one given the opportunity to anchor such a thoroughly researched and impartially presented special.

Congratulations and many thanks to "I-Witness"!

Araneta fills February with 'Love at the Center'

THE ARANETA Center celebrates February with the theme "Love at the Center."

On Feb. 9 and 10 comes an early Valentine treat in "Reminiscing 3," with American jazz diva Patti Austin and rhythm & blues artist El Debarge performing at the Araneta Coliseum.

Beauty takes center stage when the candidates of Binibining Pilipinas 2001 visit shops at the Ali Mall, Farmers Market and Farmers Plaza on Feb. 9, 10 and 11.

On Feb. 10, the Farmers Plaza will be the site of the fans day of the show business love team of Chubi del Rosario and Ann Curtis.

On Feb. 11, teenage star Jolina Magdangal is slated to launch her album "Red Alert," in cooperation with Star Records.

On Valentine Day itself, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Lani Misalucha and FreeStyle perform at the Aranata Coliseum.

At Araneta Center, the nine cinemas in Ali Mall Cineplex 7 and the Farmers Plaza theaters have an ongoing promo, "Manood at Manalo, Siguragong Walang Talo," which offers moviegoers prizes.

For information on Araneta Center events readers are urged to log on to its websites at www.aranetacenter.net, www.aranetacoliseum.com.

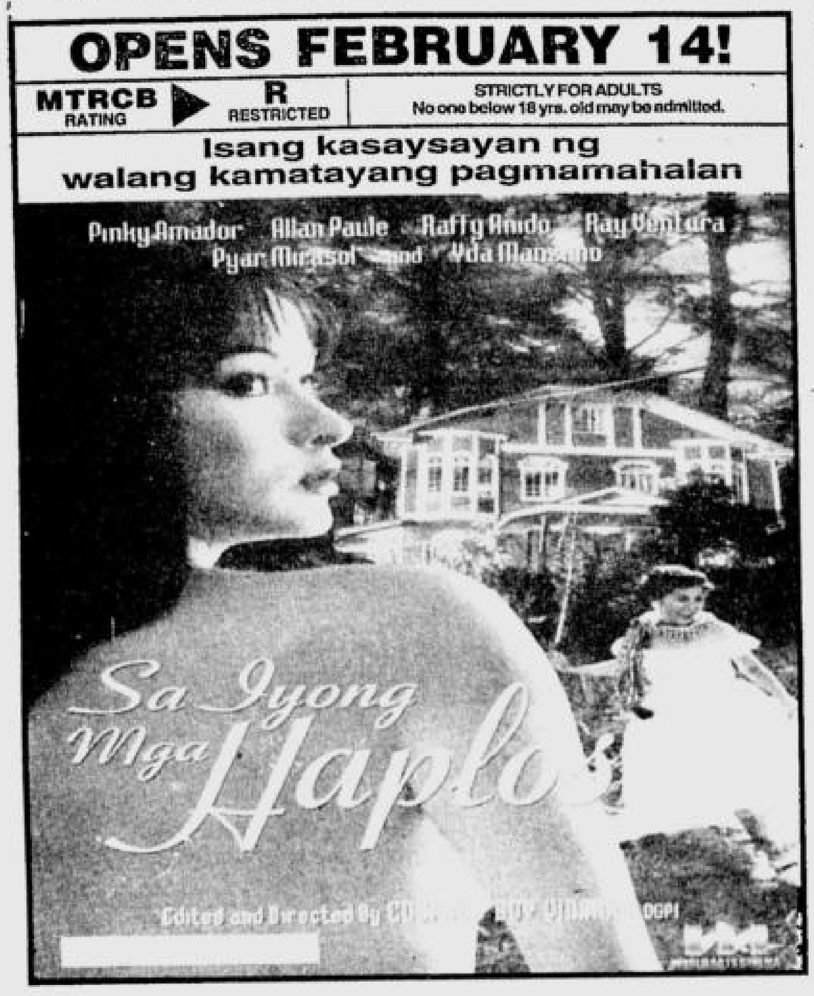
Lair of VCD pirates raided

AUTHORITIES recently raided the Mandaluyong lair of a syndicate dealing with pirated video compact discs and confiscated thousands of illegal VCDs and counterfeiting equipment.

In a statement, the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council Inc. said that on Jan. 18, authorities raided the house of Sau Hung Sze on Araullo Street in Barangay Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City, where VCDs were allegedly duplicated illegally.

The raiders, made up of members of the National Bureau of Investigation, the Videogram Regulatory Board, and the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council, had a search warrant issued by Judge Amalia F. Dy of Mandaluyong RTC Branch 213.

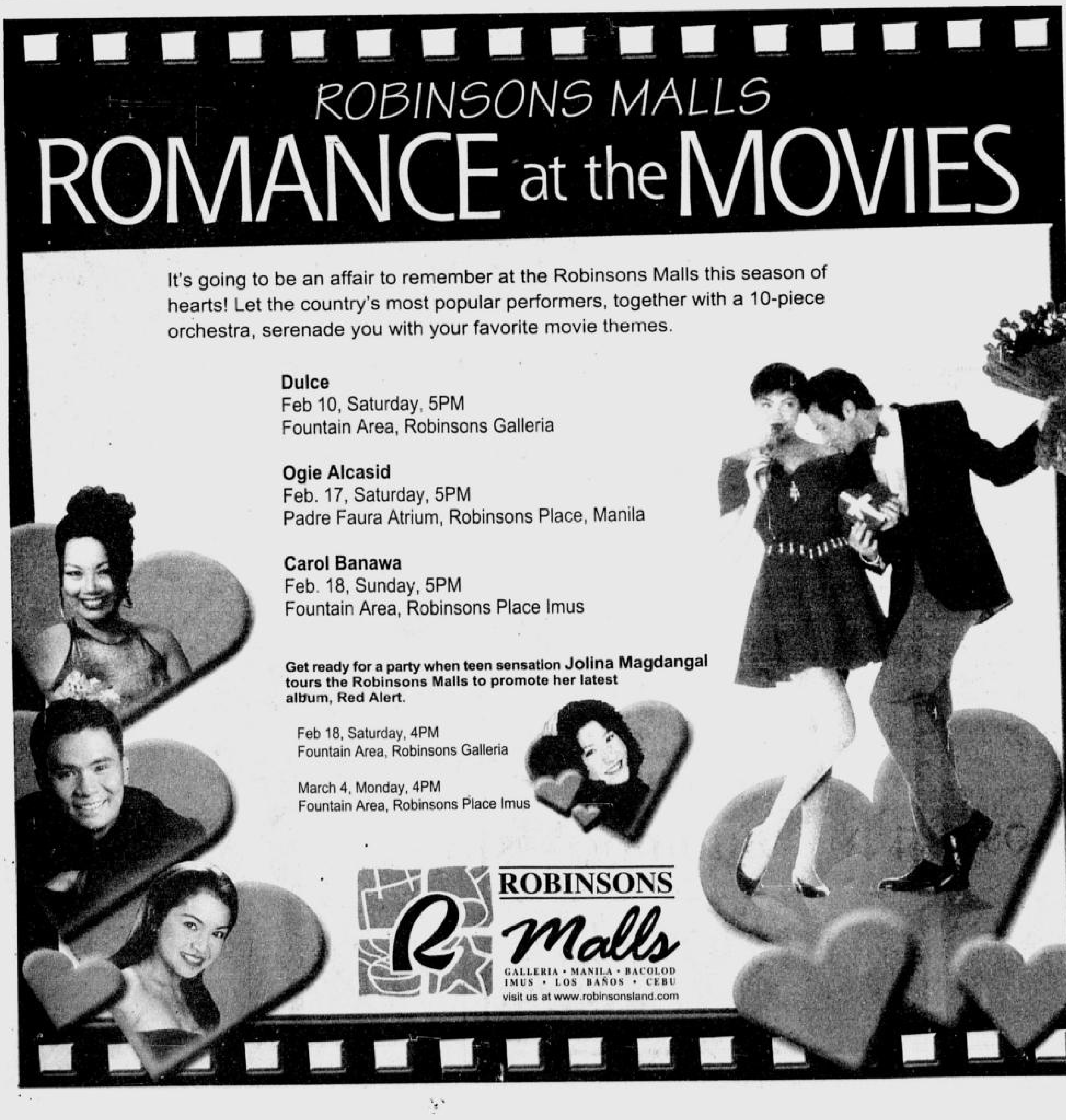
The raiders seized more than 1,000 pirated VCDs of assorted titles; labels, printed covers, rewritable and recordable discs and packaging materials; ledgers, official receipts and sales invoices of transactions of pirated items; replicating and stamping machines; 20 videocassette recorders, 10 monitors, 20 VCD players, spools, stickers, 200 videotapes, 1,000 blank VHS tapes, rewinders, amplifiers and computers.


OPENS FEBRUARY 14!

MTRCB RATING ▶ R RESTRICTED | STRICTLY FOR ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. old may be admitted.

Isang kasaysayan ng walang kamatayang pagmamahalan

Pinky Amador Allan Paule Raffy Anido Ray Ventura
Pyar Mirasol and Vda Manzano
Sa Iyong Mga Haplos
Edited and Directed by


ROBINSONS MALLS
ROMANCE at the MOVIES

It's going to be an affair to remember at the Robinsons Malls this season of hearts! Let the country's most popular performers, together with a 10-piece orchestra, serenade you with your favorite movie themes.

Dulce
Feb 10, Saturday, 5PM
Fountain Area, Robinsons Galleria

Ogie Alcasid
Feb. 17, Saturday, 5PM
Padre Faura Atrium, Robinsons Place, Manila

Carol Banawa
Feb. 18, Sunday, 5PM
Fountain Area, Robinsons Place Imus

Get ready for a party when teen sensation Jolina Magdangal tours the Robinsons Malls to promote her latest album, Red Alert.

Feb 18, Saturday, 4PM
Fountain Area, Robinsons Galleria

March 4, Monday, 4PM
Fountain Area, Robinsons Place Imus

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IMUS • LOS BAÑOS • CEBU
visit us at www.robinsonsland.com

ALCASID

NAVA

Artists perform timeless movie themes in the malls

TIMELESS movie love themes will be performed by three of the country's leading performers backed up by a 10-piece orchestra this Valentine's at the Robinsons Malls.

Catch the live performances of Dulce on Feb. 10 at the Fountain Area of Robinsons Galleria, Ogie Alcasid on Feb. 17 at the Padre Faura Atrium of Robinsons Place Manila and Roselle Nava on Feb. 18 at Lee Fountain Area of Robinsons Place Imus. Performances will start 5 p.m.

For more details, contact the Robinsons Malls Ad-Promo Department at 633-9396 or 633-7641-90, locals 175 or 176.

VALENTINE'S SHOW IN THE US
Multi-awarded singer composer Jose Mari Chan is featured in a Valentine concert, "An Evening of Love Songs with Jose Mari Chan," Saturday, Feb. 10, 8 p.m. at the Nob Hill Masonic Center in San Francisco, California. Chan will be joined by Roselle Nava and Vancouver-based singer, Joey Albert. The show is produced by Star Multimedia.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2001 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ▣ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

Equitable PCI
BANK
MEMBER PDIC
BancNet

Gov't readies changes in UCPB, SMC

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration is set to appoint new directors and officers to San Miguel Corp. and United Coconut Planters Bank, Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said yesterday.

Tipped to be named chair and president, respectively, of UCPB are former Finance Secretary Vicente Jayme Jr. and Francisco del Rosario, former vice chair of the Development Bank of the Philippines and vice president of the Government Service Insurance System.

The two are set to replace UCPB chair Jeronimo Kilayco and president Lorenzo Tan. UCPB is 95.29-percent sequestered and the remaining shares are owned by First United Bank.

UCPB was established using the controversial funds collected from coconut farmers during the time of Marcos.

Romulo admitted that Jayme and Del Rosario were being considered for UCPB as well as for other positions.

The finance secretary met with Presidential Legal Adviser Avelino Cruz yesterday. Romulo said he was hoping to get the legal report on the proposed appointments to the boards of UCPB and SMC within the week.

He said he would also ask the Malacañang legal team whether the composition of San Miguel and UCPB could be changed at this time.

"If they won't have the report yet, I would ask them to fast-track it. Hopefully we can have the report this week," the finance secretary said.

The legal study would outline the steps the government would take in "correcting" the procedures taken by the Estrada administration that was perceived to have been favorable to his associates, particularly SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

Romulo said the first step would be to rescind EOs 312 and 313 that would have declared the coconut levy funds to be private and subsequently creating a trust fund to hold the proceeds from the sale of the 27-percent stake in San Miguel bought using the coconut levy.

"We have to solidify our position that the coconut levy funds are public funds and the beneficiaries are the small coconut farmers," Romulo pointed out.

Another step would be to take back the voting rights over the 27 percent from Cojuangco, replace five other government directors in the food and beverage firm, and also change all 15 directors in UCPB.

Cojuangco regained the chairmanship of SMC a few days after ousted President Estrada came into power in July 1998. Cojuangco was one of the biggest campaign contributors to the presidential bid of Estrada.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government, created by former President Corazon Aquino to run after cronies of the late dictator Marcos, had assigned the voting rights to Cojuangco.

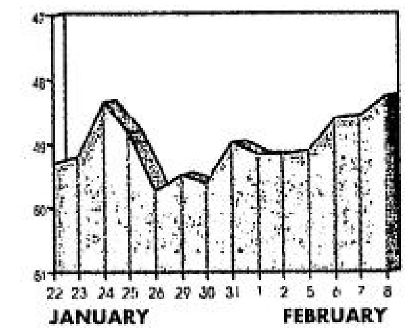
The anti-graft court had sequestered during the time of former President Aquino 47 percent of SMC on suspicion that these were ill-gotten and were bought using P9.6 billion worth of coconut levy funds collected by Marcos associate Cojuangco from coconut farmers.

Romulo said the small coconut farmers would have to be represented in both San Miguel and UCPB.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱48.25 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 8, 2001

¥116.34 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 116.34 as of 5 p.m., Feb. 8, 2001

GOLD:$263.00/263.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 8, 2001

STOCK MARKET

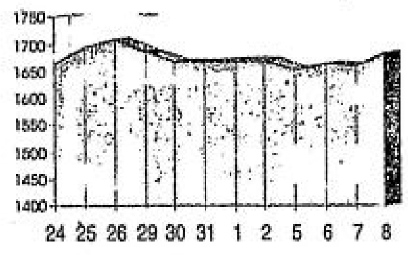
Shares end higher

SHARES closed higher yesterday, boosted by the government's decision to drop its earlier opposition to passage of a power sector reform bill, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 24.19 points, or 1.5 percent, to 1,683.44, after shedding 0.3 percent Wednesday.

"The revival of the power reform bill boosted the market, especially blue-chip stock Manila Electric," said Equitable PCI Bank fund manager Edison Yap. *AP*

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B4)

PLDT unit eyes foreign funding for GMA-7 purchase

By Anthony O. Alcantara

MEDIAQUEST Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s beneficial trust fund, has started scouting for foreign financiers who could help the company fund its P8.5-billion acquisition of TV firm GMA Network Inc.

Mediaquest president Antonio R. Samson yesterday said the company has shortlisted several foreign institutions for funding at most half of the acquisition price for the 66.67-percent stake in GMA-7.

He said these strategic investors, together with ePDLT, the principal corporate vehicle for PLDT's Internet, e-commerce and multimedia businesses, would maintain Filipino ownership of GMA-7 through the issuance of Philippine Depository Receipts (PDRs).

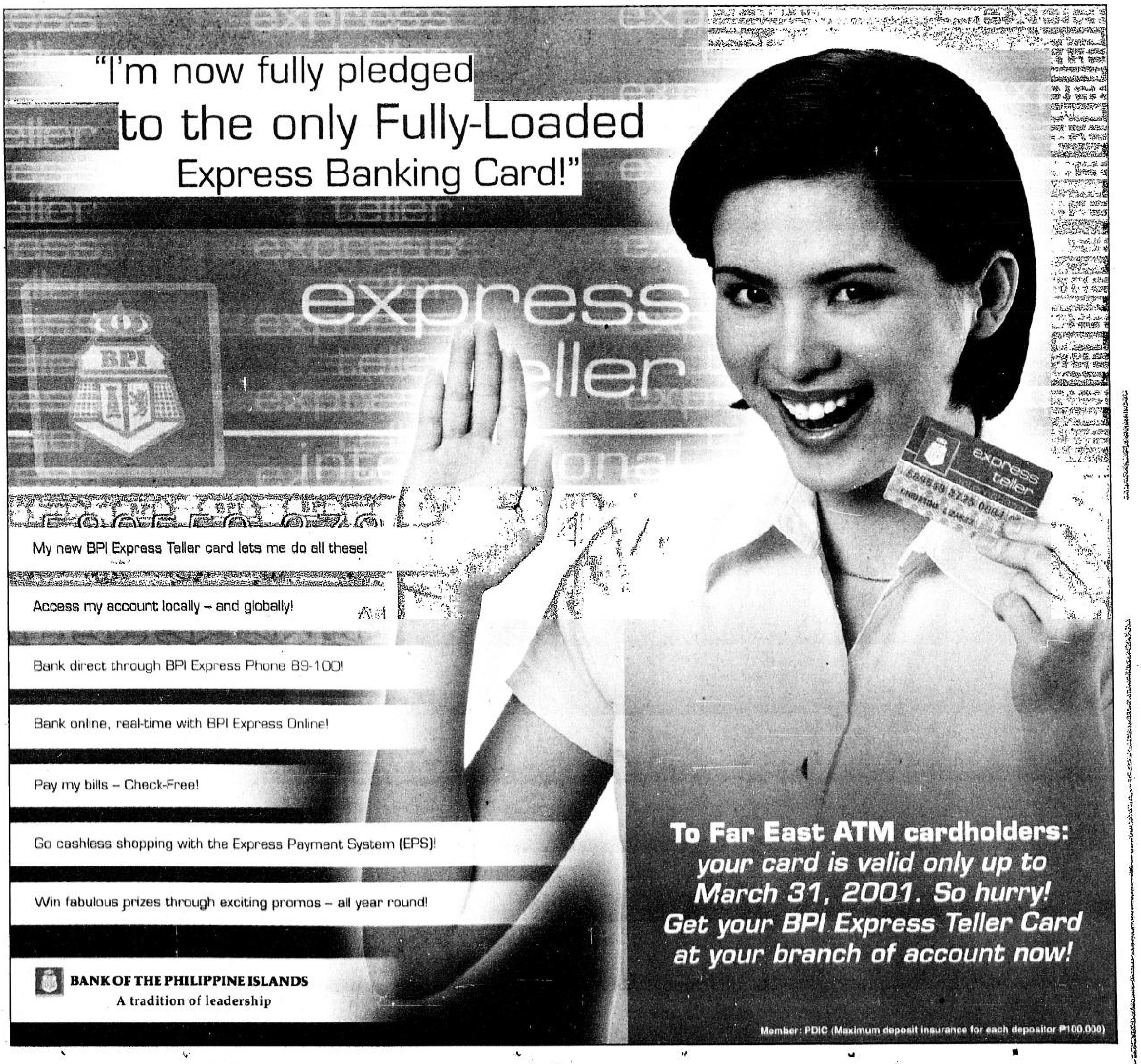
"The issuance of PDRs is the same mechanism that ABS-CBN did to invite non-Filipino investors. We have to finalize the consortium soon before we finish the due diligence (within 60 to 90 days)," he said.

"PLDT is also set to infuse an additional P1 billion into GMA-7 as capex (capital expenditure) within one year from closing the deal. This is on top of the P8.5 billion. It will be used for operating expenses as well as needed equipment for operations and increasing transmission power," the official added.

The PLDT group was also looking into the possibility of eventually listing GMA-7 on the Philippine Stock Exchange in order to raise funds for further expansion. However, there was no timetable yet since the PLDT group had to "understand the business first."

Samson also said he "(does) not foresee changes" in the terms of the memorandum of understanding signed by Mediaquest on behalf of the PLDT group and GMA-7 upon the completion of the confirmatory due-diligence presently being conducted on the TV firm.

PLDT/ B5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Congress to rush approval of power bill

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MACAPAGAL administration yesterday assured businessmen that it has reached an agreement with Congress to enact the Power Sector Restructuring Bill within the next two months.

Trade Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II disclosed this before members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry who have been clamoring for the enactment of the bill aimed at lowering power costs by transferring control and management of the power industry from the government to the private sector.

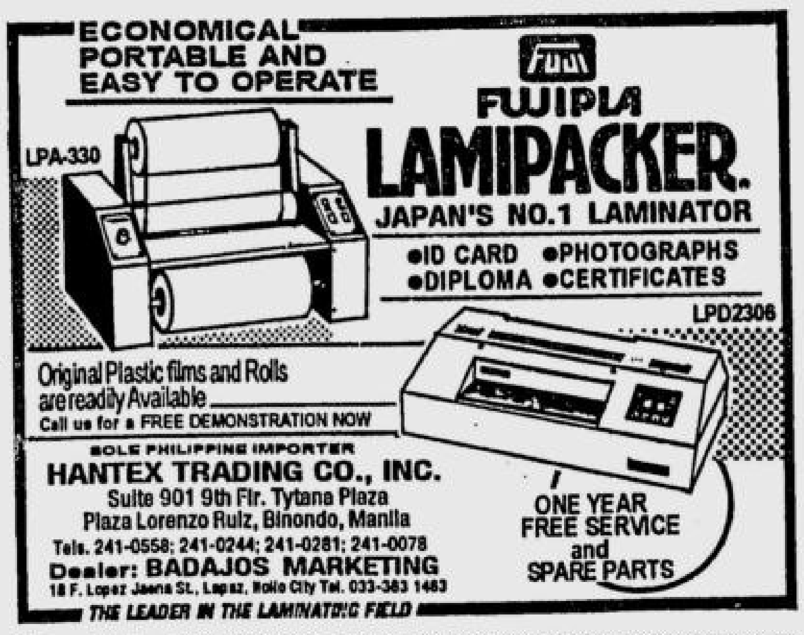
Businessmen are worried that Congress would not pass the bill before its current session ends. They warned that further delays in the passage of the power reform bill could lead to massive power outages by 2005 and block the country's access to multilateral lending agencies that have pegged the release of their loans on carrying out reforms in the power sector.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was earlier reported to be reluctant to pursue the power reform bill because of its adverse impact on the fiscal position of the government, which is grappling with a ballooning budget deficit.

But Roxas said the government was committed to enacting this bill within the present Congress.

Roxas said that during the marathon sessions of the newly revived Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac), all parties have agreed to submit their positions on the power reform bill by Tuesday next week with a public hearing to be held Friday. Afterwards, Roxas said the President would either approve or veto the final version of the bill.

Among the issues that have to be ironed out in drafting the final version of the bill are the delineation of Napocor's functions post-privatization, how to untangle stranded costs with independent power producers, the setting of power rates, concerns on Mindanao's interconnection with the national grid, questions on cross-ownership, and safety nets to consumers.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Office of the President
TOLL REGULATORY BOARD

METRO MANILA SKYWAY Stage 1
Adjusted Toll Rates
Skyway System Elevated Section (Bicutan to Gil Puyat)
Skyway System At-Grade Section (Magallanes to Alabang)

In accordance with the Supplemental Toll Operation Agreement by and among the Republic of the Philippines acting through the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), the Philippine National Construction Corporation (PNCC) and Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corporation (CMMTC), a Petition for Toll Rates Adjustment had been filed by CMMTC with the TRB. In view thereof, notice is hereby given that the following toll rates shall be the subject of a public hearing to be conducted beginning February 20, 2001, 2:00 p.m., at the 2/F Integrated Bar of the Philippines Building, Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

	CLASS 1	CLASS 2	CLASS 3
Elevated Section	Php 75.00	Php 190.00	Php 300.00
At-Grade Section			
Magallanes-Bicutan*	35.00	90.00	140.00
Bicutan-Sucat	20.00	50.00	80.00
Sucat-Alabang	20.00	50.00	80.00

* includes C-5 and Merville entry and exit points

Any interested expressway user shall have the right to file their comment/opposition to the proposed toll rate adjustment prayed for with the Toll Regulatory Board with address at 2/F Integrated Bar of the Philippines Building, Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

SO ORDERED.
February 6, 2001, Pasig City, Philippines

(SGD)MARIANO E. BENEDICTO II
Executive Director/Hearing Officer
Toll Regulatory Board

Rule breaking: Lesson learned at BTr

NATIONAL Treasurer Leonor Briones leaves office at the end of this week having discovered that the theories in public finance she had taught as a professor don't necessarily work in practice.

"I wrote books, I wrote articles. But during my stay as treasurer, I broke many of the rules . . . theory is being left behind," said the 60-year-old professor.

In a tenure lasting almost two and a half years, she broke the "rules" during one of the most testing times for the country's economy . . . but won over hard-edged markets.

She stood steadfast as national treasurer even as former President Joseph Estrada's government crumbled, telling friends she had a "duty to the office" and to keep the treasury "solvent" despite the turmoil around her.

And she found a new market for the government's debt—housewives, mechanics and other small investors. So far P704 million in treasury bills have been sold to small investors.

Appointed by Estrada to the life-long job in 1998, she finally decided to step down only when key Cabinet and economic ministers resigned shortly ahead of Estrada's ouster in January.

Good job

Her post will be taken over by former central bank director for treasury Sergio Edeza. He is currently senior vice president of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co, the country's biggest bank.

Briones leaves office with the success of having guided interest rates to considerably lower levels than when she entered. The 91-day treasury bill, used to control money market liquidity, stands at 10.86 percent compared with more than 14 percent in 1998.

"Briones did a good job in the eyes of the market. She tried hard to cover even a ballooning budget deficit," a dealer from a foreign bank said, referring to the P136.11 billion budget deficit in 2000.

BRIONES

Late last year, she had possibly her most testing time in the job at the height of the Estrada scandal as allegations of presidential corruption surfaced.

The Bangko Sentral, which operates independently of the treasury, jacked up overnight interest rates by four percentage points to try to prevent a flight of capital.

Rejecting bids

Theoretically, government treasury bills would have to do the same to stay competitive and to endorse the policy of another government department, but Briones broke the rule in that she did not accept money market's bids for government treasury bills at such high interest rates.

It was the "horrors of full rejection," she said.

"Now this is generally accepted. The market does not wince because they know I'm driving a lesson," Briones said.

In the weeks that followed, the National Treasury under Briones rejected all bids on the benchmark 91-day treasury bill because they were so high.

"While the market didn't like that, we understood that what she did was good for the economy," said a dealer.

She also entered office as a proponent of debt forgiveness, which financial markets often fear on the basis that governments will not carry out the economic reforms necessary to reduce their reliance on international debt.

Debt forgiveness

"I started with the market having reservations about me but we ended up with very high levels of respect (for each other) . . . We looked at ourselves not as protagonists but as partners," Briones said.

"What I always challenge them to do is to look at the bigger picture, not just to look at today's profits or today's margins but to look at the bigger picture of the economy."

She gave financial markets a more realistic insight into the state of the government's finances. It was a frankness new to dealers but which was rewarded in steadier interest rates.

"We knew she was somebody we could trust," one banker said.

Briones said she would spend her last days in office saying her goodbyes.

"(I have to take down) my paintings, my books, say the proper goodbye to all the officers . . . I sleep here frequently so I have to clean . . . the little room I sleep in, say goodbye to the ghosts of this building," Briones said.

She is considering a return to academic life, where she could offer fresh theories on public finances from her time in the driving seat of the government's coffers. *Reuters*

Oil companies to raise LPG prices

By Christine A. Gaylican

LOCAL prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) were expected to increase soon as the international contract prices of the commodity rose steadily due to higher demand, the Petroleum Institute of the Philippines Inc. said.

The contract prices of LPG averaged at $332.50 per metric ton this month, or $36 higher than the average in December of $296.50 per metric ton. The price excludes shipment costs and specific taxes.

PIP executive director Reynaldo Marquez said the international contract prices of LPG due to the additional demand coming from petrochemical companies worldwide.

"Though there was a softening in the prices of crude and other petroleum products in December and January, the prices of LPG continued to escalate," Marquez told the INQUIRER.

Local oil companies led by the major refiners Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Inc. and Caltex Philippines Inc. are planning to raise their LPG prices by the end of the month or in early March.

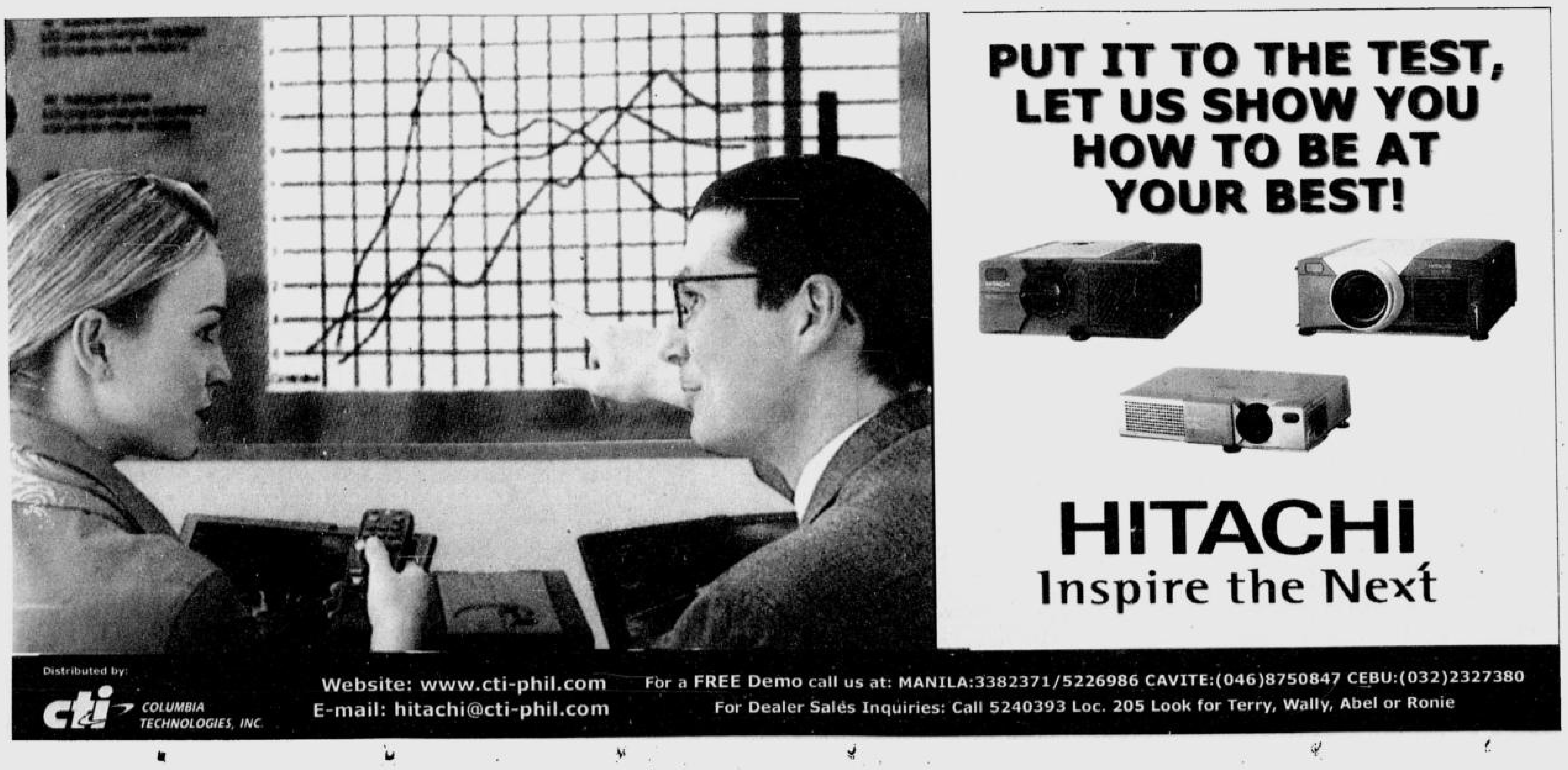
As a "socially sensitive" commodity, the adjustment in the prices of LPG was postponed by the local oil firms for several times in the past.

The last time LPG prices were raised was in July last year when 11-kg LPG cylinder was increased by P11.

The "Big Three" still accounted for the bulk of the LPG market while the new oil players cornered 24 percent. Total Petroleum Philippines Corp., Liquigaz, Pryce Gases are some of the new entrants that are neck and neck with the so-called "Big Three" in the LPG market.

The new players sell LPG at prices P9 to P10 lower than the prices of the Big Three, which sell LPG by an average of P275 per 11-kg cylinder.

As early as October last year, Petron is looking at a P16 increase for the 11-kg LPG cylinder. However, Petron was not able to adjust its prices because of pressure from Malacañang since the political crisis during that time.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COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

THE HOLDOVER deputy transportation and communications secretary, Agustin Bengzon, now admits that at least P5.9 billion in government money would be used by private telephone companies to revive the Telepono sa Barangay program.

Bengzon, who crafted the Estrada-era program, which his new DOTC boss swallowed hook, line and sinker, said concessional 10-year loans "at single-digit interest rates" would be granted by the government financial institutions to the participating telephone firms.

In addition to extending subsidized loans, the GFIs (SSS, GSIS, DBP and Landbank) would also be made to guarantee the "loans, credits or indebtedness" of telephone companies from both foreign and local suppliers.

In other words, in case the telephone firms abscond or fail to pay the suppliers, the suppliers would have nothing to worry about since the GFIs would assume the remaining liabilities.

How lucky can some people get!

Clarissa's lawyers

HOW would you react if a leading prosecution law firm in the impeachment trial bolts out of the blue to defend the Erap contractor of those Wack Wack mansions?

Would you, like Dick the Butcher, quote the famous Henry VI line while you switch to a homicidal mode?

We have received a letter from Alexander Poblador of Poblador Bautista and Reyes, the same law firm that represented Equitable Bank and Clarissa Ocampo, who now rises to defend San Miguel vice chair Ramon Ang, owner of the construction company that built those mansions for presidential mistresses.

If you will recall, Cocktales reported thrice that Ang was one of the two men inside the office of Erap counsel Estelito Mendoza whom Ocampo could not identify during the Dec. 13 meeting.

During that meeting, then Equitable PCI Bank chair George Go, Erap lawyer/classmate Fernando Chua, and Erap's favorite telecom supplier, Jaime Dichaves, attempted to create a new set of Jose Velarde documents to lead the paper trail away from the real Jose Velarde.

"The truth is that while Mr. Ang was also at the office of Attorney Mendoza that day, it was to seek Mr. Mendoza's advice on another matter," wrote Poblador.

"His presence there had nothing to do with the impeachment trial of Mr. Estrada," continued Poblador. "Atty. Mendoza has been Mr. Ang's lawyer for the past several years, and he often consults with him on various legal matters."

Poblador, who was not present in the Mendoza meeting to determine the accuracy of his client's representation, could not explain why Ang chose him, instead of Mendoza, to vouch for Ang's alibi.

Poblador said Ang has been a client since the 1980s. Ang's employer, San Miguel Corp., which sent the Poblador letter to the INQUIRER, is also another client.

Short takes

- CONGRESSMEN Joker Arroyo and Oscar Moreno are playing a dangerous game dredging up the 11th-hour Ejercito withdrawals from Urban Bank and attempting to pin the tip-off to Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

Instead of wounding Buenaventura as intended, the attack could backfire on the Urban Bank management.

Remember the Frank Eizmendi case?

- ENERGY Undersecretary Mario Bomasang, Deutsche Bank country manager Lito Camacho, and Pacific Cement president Jose Cortes Jr. are said to be the frontrunners to the energy portfolio.
- IN case you failed to notice it, the revelations of former Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara about the last days of the Estrada administration run counter against the public pronouncements made by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile in regard to Enrile's role in this whole mess.

Heard through the grapevine

METRO Pacific's Alberto del Rosario is the next ambassador to Washington.

And Zorayda "Mel" Alonzo is due to return as head of Pag-Ibig Fund.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Gov't studies plan to regain stake in PNB

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE MACAPAGAL administration is studying a plan to recover its equity holdings in Philippine National Bank through a debt-to-equity arrangement involving the bank's P25-billion obligation to the government.

The plan could restore the government's holdings in the bank to 30.4 percent or possibly even above 50 percent, Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said yesterday.

Romulo said the proposal, which is now being studied by the Department of Finance, came from former Central Bank Governor Jose Cuisia.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said it was up to the national government if it wanted to convert PNB's P25-billion loan into equity.

The government stake in PNB was reduced from 30.4 percent to 16 percent last September after the Lucio Tan group infused P10 billion in fresh capital. This gave the taipan more than 70-percent controlling interest in the bank, up from 46 percent.

PNB borrowed P15 billion from the BSP and P10 billion from Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. last Oct. 6 after it claimed to have suffered from heavy withdrawals during the time when Tan's infusion was uncertain.

"We will give DOF a chance to review the entire rehab plan to make it consistent with rules of the government. My main concern is how to make PNB viable again," Buenaventura said.

BSP and PDIC strictly could not convert the loans and take equity position in the bank. However, they could pass on the obligations to the national government which, in turn, can regain control of PNB.

The entire rehabilitation plan that had been approved in principle by BSP is also being reviewed by the national government.

PNB is the fifth largest bank with assets of P105 billion, but it is saddled with one of the highest non-performing loan ratio of close to 40 percent.

Cuisia had branded as a "sweetheart deal" the plan of PNB to settle its P15-billion loan to BSP through a payment-in-kind arrangement.

"I hope BSP would work out to improve its position like getting a call option, pressuring Lucio Tan to put in more money in PNB, and let PNB assume part of the loan for the financial center," Cuisia said.

PNB plans to settle P10 billion of the P15 billion loan to the BSP through the transfer of its P8-billion Financial Center.

At the same time, PNB would settle its P10-billion obligation to state-owned insurer PDIC by transferring government liabilities to PDIC worth about P9 billion.

These liabilities would include a P5-billion loan to the Bureau of Customs so it could pay its obligations to import inspector SGS and a P4.5-billion loan of [illegible] Philippine sugar trading company owed to PNB during the time of Marcos.

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DBP negotiating for P56B worth of loans, assistance

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-CONTROLLED Development Bank of the Philippines is availing itself of P56 billion ($1.18 billion) worth of fresh loans and assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors this year to boost its developmental lending operations and help pump prime the economy.

Based on data from the office of DBP president and CEO Remedios Macalincag, the bulk of the official development assistance (ODA) will come from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

Despite recent criticisms on the slow disbursement of ODA funds in the Philippines due to poor project implementation, a bank spokesperson explained that DBP was still getting a good share of multilateral and bilateral assistance because it has proven to be an effective conduit of ODA funds.

The DBP is negotiating for some P30.5 billion in loans with JBIC, the merged Japan Export-Import Bank and Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, for relending to manufacturing industries.

Macalincag said the facility would be ready by March and would be re-channelled to manufacturing industries with asset size of P200 million and above.

JBIC is also being tapped by the DBP for a community development project worth P23.8 billion ($470 million), broken down as follows:

- P7.6 billion for relending to housing;
- P7.6 billion for assistance to secondary mortgage institution; and,
- P8.6 billion for other community development projects.

The DBP also expects to sign in November some P1.6 billion worth of new facility for the LGU Solid Waste Management Program with Kredit Anstalt fuer Wiedraufbau (KfW), a German lending agency.

Also in the pipeline is the P3 billion worth of World Bank loan for the LGU urban water and sanitation project. DBP expects to start drawing from this facility in September.

DBP is also in negotiations with the Nordic Investment Bank for P999 million worth of loans for relending to businesses with Nordic interests. The facility is expected to be finalized by the third quarter of the year.

The DBP said these agencies remained satisfied with the way the state-owned bank was disbursing ODA funds.

From January to November last year, the DBP approved P91.8 billion in "wholesale" loans, up from the P72.4 billion recorded the same period in 1999.

Equitable expects merger, buy-in offers in March

By Elena R. Torrijos

EQUITABLE PCI Bank, through an independent investment bank, is holding talks with the country's three largest banks for a possible mega-merger.

At the same time, the bank is continuing its search for a strategic foreign investor.

A source privy to the negotiations told the INQUIRER that Equitable has tapped ING Barings to get a foreign strategic partner who would be willing to infuse fresh capital into the local bank and buy the 10-percent stake held by EBC Investment Inc.

Also, the bank has commissioned JP Morgan Chase to present merger proposals to the board of Equitable PCI Bank. Specifically, the US-based investment house is holding talks with Bank of the Philippine Islands, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

In a recent interview with the INQUIRER, BPI president Xavier Loinaz confirmed that BPI was interested in a merger with Equitable PCI Bank, the third biggest bank in the country.

DISCLOSURES

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. will list today 86,246 of its common shares under the company's stock purchase and option plan. This brings the number of the common shares listed under the said plan to a total of 742,489.

* * *

THE BOARD of **PhilWeb.Com Inc.** approved the grant of bonus warrants. Each stockholder holding 10 shares as of record date will be entitled to one bonus warrant to be issued free of charge.

* * *

THE REHABILITATION plan of **Philippine National Bank** has not yet been acted upon by the **Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas** and the **Philippine Deposits Insurance Corp.**

* * *

MANILA Broadcasting Co. will hold a special stockholders' meeting on Feb. 23, 3 p.m., at the FJE Boardroom, 6th floor, FJE Bldg., Legaspi Village, Makati.

* * *

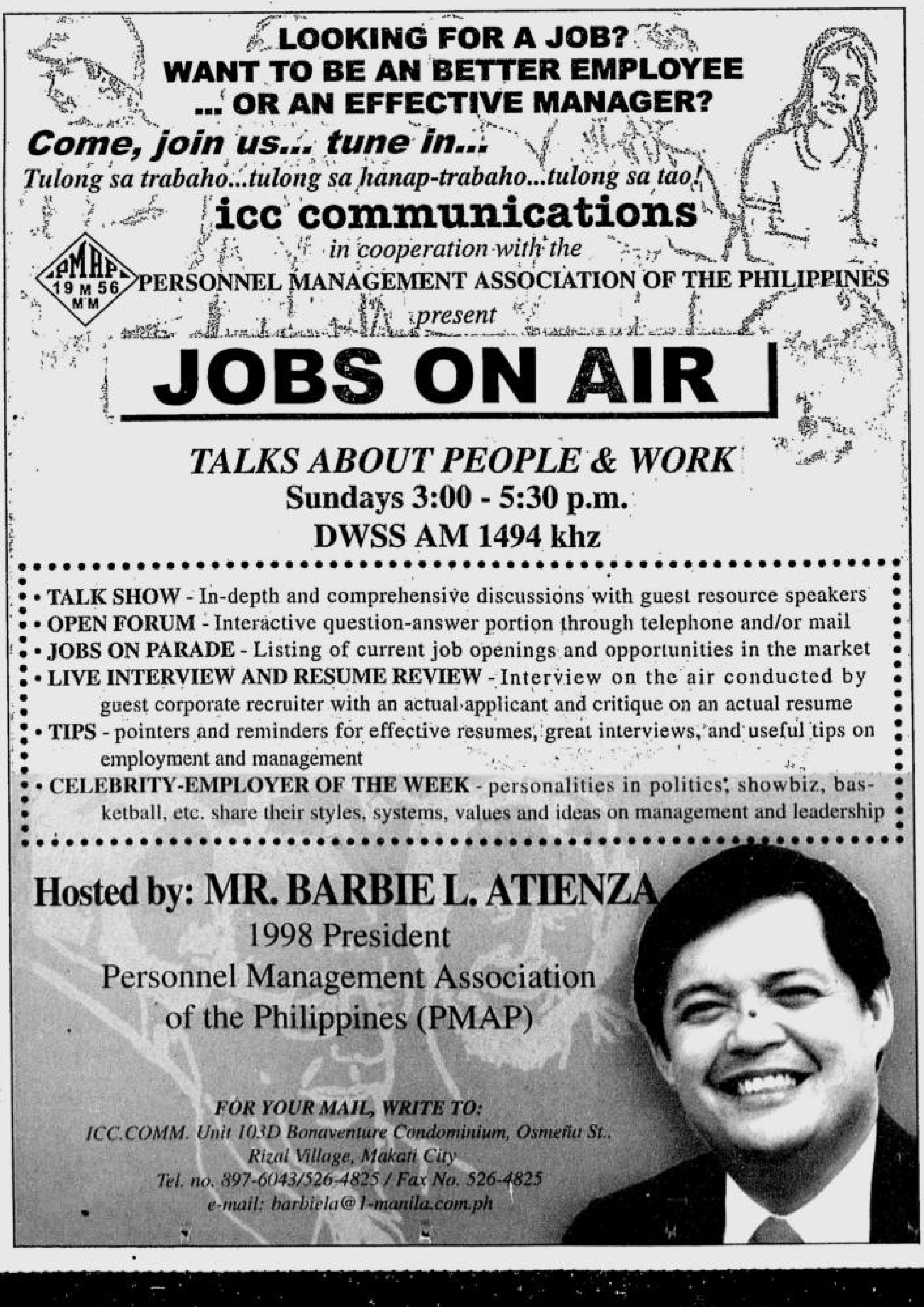
PHILODRILL Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 23. The record date is Feb. 23.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. will hold a briefing on its 2000 yearend financial results on Feb. 12, 2 p.m., at the executive dining room, SMC head office, Mandaluyong City. *Compiled by Armin P. Adina, PDI Research*

NEW JOINT VENTURE

Asia Global Crossing president and CEO John Legere, DigitelOne president and CEO Lance Gokongwei, and Doyle Stout of BI Group spearheaded the launch of their joint venture, Digitel Crossing. The company will build a broadband infrastructure that will link the Philippines to the world's largest 200 cities, spread over 27 countries.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- OPEN FORUM - Interactive question-answer portion through telephone and/or mail
- JOBS ON PARADE - Listing of current job openings and opportunities in the market
- LIVE INTERVIEW AND RESUME REVIEW - Interview on the air conducted by guest corporate recruiter with an actual applicant and critique on an actual resume
- TIPS - pointers and reminders for effective resumes, great interviews, and useful tips on employment and management
- CELEBRITY-EMPLOYER OF THE WEEK - personalities in politics, showbiz, basketball, etc. share their styles, systems, values and ideas on management and leadership

Hosted by: MR. BARBIE L. ATIENZA
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BOC clarifies Urban merger

BANK of Commerce said yesterday it wanted legal issues concerning the closure of Urban Bank Inc. "resolved with finality" first before it would proceed with plans to merge with the shuttered bank and its investment unit, Urbancorp Investments Inc.

In a statement, Bank of Commerce president Raul de Mesa said "various legal issues" concerning Urban Bank's closure "have to be clarified first."

"Because of these developments, the bank considers it prudent to proceed with the plan only if all the legal issues are resolved with finality," De Mesa said.

He reiterated Bank of Commerce's "desire to fulfill its obligations," stressing that the bank's plan to rehabilitate Urban Bank got the consent of 90 percent of Urban Bank's and Urbancorp Investments' depositors and creditors, including the Social Security System, San Miguel Corp., Manila Electric Co. and Petron Corp.

De Mesa said the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. had approved Bank of Commerce's rehabilitation plan over the one submitted by Asian United Bank.

Bank of Commerce tendered a better proposal that included, among others, a three-year payback term as compared to Asian United Bank's seven years.

Bank of Commerce also had the support of a majority of Urban Bank shareholders and was willing to include Urbancorp Investment in the rehabilitation.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Thursday, February 8, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68.50	71.5	68.5	71	236,700
China Banking Corp.	750.0	750	750	750	220
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	54.00	54	53.5	54	47,100
First E-Bank Corp.	2.20	2.2	2.2	2.2	25,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	234.0	234	233	234	40,750
Philippine National Bank	33.00	33.5	33	33.5	15,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.00	30	29	30	1,700
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	5,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1345	1345	1340	1340	4,490
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1190	1190	1140	1140	15,440
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	47.00	47.5	47	47.5	21,200
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	.7400	.78	.74	.76	5,150,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	700.0	700	700	700	280
Island Info and Tech Inc.	.0600	.0625	.06	.0625	10,100,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	.5000	.52	.5	.5	460,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	4.00	4.05	4	4.05	44,000
Piltel	.9300	.93	.86	.87	2,530,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	.4500	.5	.45	.5	50,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	900.0	915	900	915	107,600
Ivantage Corp.	1.00	1.06	1	1.06	243,000
Philweb.com Inc.	.0750	.085	.075	.085	616,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. "A"	51.00	54	51	53.5	32,100
Manila Electric Co. "B"	60.00	62.5	60	62	1,934,100
Petron Corp.	1.84	1.96	1.84	1.96	10,772,000
Trans-asia Oil and Energy	.9300	.93	.93	.93	30,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l SV	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.32	2,314,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	.5300	.57	.53	.57	90,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	.2200	.22	.22	.22	200,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	.5200	.52	.52	.52	120,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	.1650	.165	.165	.165	50,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	.8200	.82	.82	.82	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	.8700	.87	.86	.86	220,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.30	2.3	2	2	100,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.50	2.5	2.5	2.5	10,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	701,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	39.00	39.5	39	39	514,200
Pancake House Inc.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	4,000
RFM Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.06	917,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	51.50	52	51.5	52	113,500
San Miguel Corp. "B"	64.00	64	63	64	122,500
Universal Robina Corp.	5.60	5.6	5.6	5.6	691,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg "A"	.5600	.56	.56	.56	30,000
Ayala Corp.	8.20	8.2	8.1	8.2	963,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	.2060	.2	.18	.2	2,550,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.54	1.64	1.54	1.64	267,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.00	12.25	12	12.25	900
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	150,000
A. Soriano Corp.	.3000	.32	.3	.32	50,000
APC Group Inc.	.2300	.23	.22	.225	870,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	.0055	.0055	.0055	.0055	10,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.50	2.5	2.5	2.5	5,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	2.00	2	2	2	25,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	.3300	.33	.33	.33	200,000
Bacnotan Cons. Indus. Inc.	12.00	12	12	12	18,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	.2200	.22	.22	.22	500,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.15	3.25	3.15	3.2	9,161,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	.1850	.19	.185	.19	190,000
Southeast Asian Cement	.2500	.25	.25	.25	20,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	.5500	.55	.53	.55	870,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	.1800	.19	.18	.19	750,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	655,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.18	2.55	2.16	2.55	14,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	22.25	23.5	22.25	23.25	1,324,800
Forum Pacific Inc.	.3300	.33	.33	.33	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	.3800	.4	.38	.4	760,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	.2800	.32	.28	.32	530,000
Ionics Inc.	15.50	15.5	15.25	15.5	10,700
J G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.55	2.7	2.55	2.7	1,834,000
Megaworld Corp.	.9600	.98	.95	.95	7,030,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	.3600	.4	.36	.4	2,020,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	.6700	.68	.67	.67	4,600,000
Solid Group Inc.	.7400	.83	.74	.82	9,640,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	.4300	.44	.42	.42	3,790,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	.4000	.4	.38	.39	1,460,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	.6000	.6	.6	.6	10,000
A Brown Company Inc.	.7000	.7	.7	.7	50,000
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	5,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	6.40	6.4	6.4	6.4	6,000
Music Corp.	3.20	3.25	3.2	3.25	165,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	.6400	.64	.64	.64	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	.1500	.15	.15	.15	700,000
Philtread Tire & Rubber A	3.00	3	3	3	6,000
Reynolds Philippine Corp.	.2000	.2	.18	.19	680,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	.9700	.97	.96	.97	140,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.00	12	11.75	11.75	197,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	.6500	.69	.65	.68	1,930,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	.6600	.68	.64	.64	5,180,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	.6100	.61	.61	.61	30,000
Manila Jockey Club	15.50	15.5	15.5	15.5	200
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	47.50	48.5	47.5	47.5	992,500
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.20	3.2	3.1	3.1	220,000
Jollibee Warrants	10.75	11	10.75	11	321,300
Omico Corp. Warrant	.0032	.0032	.0032	.0032	27,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.50	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.50	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.50	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.50	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.60	6.8	6.6	6.6	12,566,000
C & P Homes Inc.	.3500	.36	.34	.36	6,290,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	.4900	.5	.46	.46	1,140,000
Empire East Land Inc.	.4400	.45	.43	.43	8,300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.75	2.85	2.75	2.85	3,393,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	.0450	.045	.045	.045	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	.1900	.19	.19	.19	240,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	.4100	.42	.41	.42	280,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	.4000	.4	.4	.4	10,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.70	6.8	6.7	6.7	14,960,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	.1150	.125	.115	.125	2,700,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	.0070	.007	.007	.007	13,000,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	.0055	.006	.0055	.006	55,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.30	3.3	3.1	3.1	90,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. "A"	.2000	.2	.2	.2	920,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co "B"	.2050	.205	.205	.205	140,000
Manila Mining Corp. "A"	.0065	.0065	.0065	.0065	72,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. "B"	.0065	.0065	.0065	.0065	12,000,000
Omico Corp.	.0046	.0048	.0046	.0048	50,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't. Corp.	.0190	.021	.019	.021	1,500,000
Philex Mining Corp. "B"	.2450	.245	.245	.245	20,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	.2000	.2	.2	.2	30,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	.0300	.033	.03	.032	31,100,000
Interport Res.	.0065	.0065	.0065	.0065	12,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "A"	.0055	.0055	.0055	.0055	16,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "B"	.0055	.0055	.0055	.0055	30,000,000
Pacifica	.0190	.02	.019	.02	23,800,000
Sinophil Corp.	.0900	.09	.09	.09	900,000
South China Resources Inc.	.3500	.35	.35	.35	80,000
Vulcan Ind'l.	.2500	.25	.25	.25	10,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	391,400	53,169,000.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	752,228,280	505,713,925.00
PRO	50,879,000	201,028,100.00
Mining	204,700,000	1,740,100.00
OIL	113,890,000	1,906,700.00
GRAND TOTALS:	1,122,088,680	763,557,825.00
AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	620.76	UP13.98
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,316.10	UP32.47
PRO	626.78	UP6.98
Mining	1,306.21	DOWN32.22
OIL	2.01	UP0.05
All Shares Index	824.74	UP2.57
Composite	1,683.44	UP24.19

NO. OF ADVANCES: 58; NO. OF DECLINES: 27; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 44;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 129; NO. OF TRADES: 4,186

CURRENCIES

Feb. 8, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.077006	1.000000	48.7060
Japan	Yen	0.009259	0.008597	0.4187
United Kingdom	Pound	1.564243	1.452400	70.7406
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.138081	0.128208	6.2445
Switzerland	Franc	0.651074	0.604522	29.4438
Canada	Dollar	0.713343	0.662339	32.2599
Singapore	Dollar	0.616136	0.572082	27.8638
Australia	Dollar	0.588046	0.546001	26.5935
Bahrain	Dinar	2.856932	2.652661	129.2005
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.287178	0.266645	12.9872
Brunei	Dollar	0.616207	0.572148	27.8670
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000112	0.000104	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.025258	0.023452	1.1423
UAE	Dirham	0.293262	0.272294	13.2624
Korea	Won	0.000852	0.000791	0.0385
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.928500	45.2235
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.474735	23.1224
France	Franc	0.152450	0.141549	6.8943
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.421335	20.5215
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.067477	3.2865
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.023017	1.1211
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000480	0.0234
Finland	Markka	0.168187	0.156162	7.6060
Portugal	Escudo	0.004991	0.004634	0.2257
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.00558	0.2718
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.023017	1.1211
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.178952	57.4220

Let's all support Pat Sto. Tomas

LABOR MANAGEMENT FORUM

Josephus B. Jimenez

THE BURDEN of leadership commences at the point of choosing the key men and women who will help the President run the government. There were a lot of complaints that GMA's choices were but a hastily assembled mix of recycled *trapos*, ex-generals and political protégés. We take exception in the case of the incoming secretary of labor and employment.

The one and only appointee, aside from Romulo, Roxas and Gordon, who fully satisfies the standards of GMA on competence, integrity and dedication is no other than the new labor secretary, Patricia Aragon Sto. Tomas, erstwhile chair of the search committee, whose surprise appointment is unanimously accepted by DOLE insiders, and the business and labor sectors. With Pat's appointment, we now withdraw our earlier pessimism on the quality of GMA's appointment.

Some quarters attributed a little awkwardness to the fact that the one tasked to search was the one chosen. It was not the fault of Pat. In fairness, her name was not included in the short list of prospective appointees for the labor portfolio. She was not endorsed by the search committee. But the President exercised her appointing prerogative by choosing Pat as she is the most qualified and the most acceptable. Besides, her talents have not been tapped for quite a while after her term as Civil Service Commission chair expired a couple of years ago.

Competence and experience

If we are searching for a career executive whose technical competence in Philippine labor relations and administration equals the depth of Ople's wisdom on this field, there are only about less than a dozen of such caliber in the Philippines today, which include Torres, Confesor, Noriel, E. Herrera, Señeres, Ofreneo, Laguesma, Magsalin and Baldoz. We submit that if we rank them based on competence and experience, Pat Sto. Tomas will definitely be in the top three of this exclusive group.

Pat is respected by career professionals in DOLE. She is a homegrown talent who rose from the ranks. Her new appointment is another case of the return of the native, similar to that of Señeres to NLRC. She started her government career in the mid-'70s as director of the Institute of Labor and Manpower Studies, think-tank of the labor ministry under the leadership of the old DOLE "guru," Ople. Pat was the writer behind Ople, who was the writer of President Marcos. Most of the DOLE documents passed through the scrutiny of Pat during Ople's DOLE stewardship.

Pat also became chair of the National Wages Council, administrator of the POEA and then undersecretary of labor and chair of the Civil Service Commission. Her career in the government is oriented along the lines of employment, labor standards, labor policies and skills development. The areas where she will probably need strong support is in labor relations and the promotion of labor justice and industrial peace. She understands the basic philosophies, principles and mechanics of the Philippine labor administration.

Integrity and dedication

Pat's honesty is unassailable. No one can say that she can be influenced by fear or favor. She is uncompromising in her integrity in public service. She has no strong bias for or against any trade union, whether the right-leaning TUCP of Mendoza and Herrera or the left represented by KMU's Beltran and BMP's Lagman. She is acceptable to centrist trade unions like the FFW of Tan and Jabar.

The dedication of Pat Sto. Tomas has been proven all through the years.

She devotes no less than 20 hours a day of hard work and goes to the office more than six days a week. Her work ethic approximates that of FVR. She reviews all documents before stamping her approval. She delegates the nitty-gritty, but she reserves the right to examine sensitive papers before passing judgment on official matters pending before her office.

What to expect from Pat

Based on her track record, we can safely say that Pat will demand the best from her staff. She requires consultations and consensus-building prior to decision-making. DOLE executives will be required to lead by example. She won't tolerate any sloppy or hasty work. She definitely will prosecute the dishonest and the corrupt. And she demands punctuality and regular attendance. Executives who spend office hours in golf courses and coffee shops will be dealt with accordingly.

Since the strength of Pat is on employment and labor standards, POEA, OWWA and BWC, administrators will be called upon to improve the service-orientation and customer-focus of their agencies. Staff officers will be called upon to exercise utmost prudence in the use of government resources. Line agencies will be expected to improve their image, especially on competence and honesty. Labor relations agencies like the NLRC and the NCMB will most probably be given enough freedom to act within the framework of her priorities.

Pat needs our support

For her to succeed, we have to give Pat all the support that she needs. The labor sector should repose on her the trust that she deserves. Management should also give her a chance to pursue President GMA's agenda. Pat Sto. Tomas is pro-people but not anti-capital. She fully understands the dynamics of labor-management relations. She has enough experience managing the mutual inter-relations between employment and wages.

Pat should be given a free hand to reorganize the DOLE bureaucracy. The prerogative of the labor secretary to hire, reshuffle, transfer, promote and dismiss personnel should be sustained. These are extraordinary times calling for extraordinary measures. Even job security, seniority, narrow job and functional boundaries should give way to the imperatives of change. We should all make sure that Pat should lead the DOLE into new levels of success. If we want a quality labor administration, let us give Pat a vote of total confidence.

PLDT unit . . .

(From page B1)

On Feb. 7, Mediaquest signed a memorandum of understanding with GMA Network Inc. for the acquisition of a 66.67-percent majority stake in the TV firm.

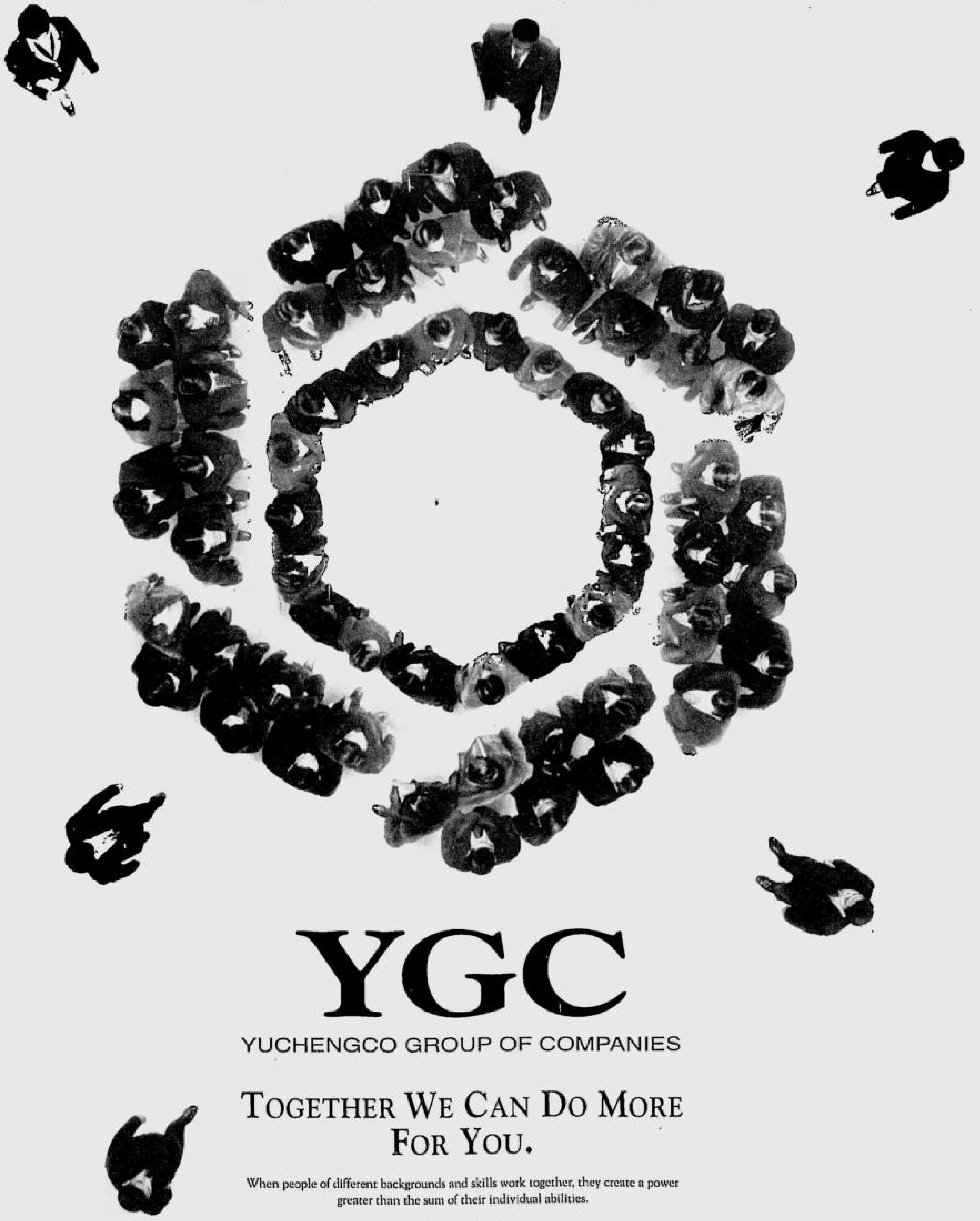
The price will be based on an enterprise value of P14.59 billion for 100 percent of GMA-7 minus the company's debts or loans. Since the TV network had about P2 billion in net debt, Mediaquest would have to shell out about P8.5 billion for the 66.67-percent stake.

The acquisition would help the PLDT group provide the content for its convergence initiatives. Convergence refers to the eventual fusion of telecommunications, broadcast and Internet services through one medium or conduit.

Upon completion of the deal, existing shareholders of GMA-7 would become minority shareholders. They would only be selling chunks of their shares in proportion to their ownership of the TV firm.

At present, GMA-7 is owned 35 percent by the Jimenez group, 35 percent by the Duavit group and 30 percent by the Gozon group.

Among the considerations of the PLDT group for the acquisition are prospects of business, cash flow, revenues, market positioning and price. Since telecommunication companies are prohibited by law to acquire broadcast companies, the PLDT group had to course the acquisition through one of its subsidiaries.



THE STRENGTHS OF MANY,
THE POWER OF ONE.

YGC
YUCHENGCO GROUP OF COMPANIES

TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE
FOR YOU.

When people of different backgrounds and skills work together, they create a power greater than the sum of their individual abilities.

This is the strength of synergy.
And this is the strength of YGC. The Yuchengco Group of Companies.

YGC is all of Malayan Insurance, RCBC, Grepalife, Pacific Plans, House of Investments, RCBC Bankard, AY Foundation and 26 other companies. Working as one to better serve our customers. Harnessing 75 years of experience and expertise in a wide range of industries: from insurance to infrastructure, education to information technology, banking to business partnerships with major local and international companies – with a solitary vision to help build our nation's future, and help fulfill our people's dreams.

It's time you found out how our synergy can work for you.

YGC

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· Affiliates: Hi Eisai Pharmaceutical, Inc. · The Hi Daiei Trading Co., Inc. · Manila Memorial Park Cemetery, Inc. · Nippon Life Insurance Co. of the Philippines, Inc. · Tokio Marine Malayan Insurance Co., Inc.

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STALLED REBOUND

Japan revises GDP, says economy shrank

TOKYO—Japan's economy shrank 0.6 percent in the July-September quarter, the government said yesterday, in a sign the country's rebound from a lengthy slowdown was stalling.

The gross domestic product data were revised from a preliminary announcement in December of a 0.2-percent growth, handing the world's second largest economy its first quarter of contraction since October-December of 1999.

The Cabinet Office's announcement raises concerns that Japan may not meet its target for a 1.2-percent growth this fiscal year, which could prove troubling for embattled Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, who has promised to usher in an era of growth.

But Eiji Kawade, vice minister of the Cabinet Office, said the government stood by its growth estimates for this year.

"When we made the forecasts, we factored in" the possibility of slower growth, Kawade said.

Mori, whose approval ratings have dropped to 14 percent, is already under pressure from recent scandals that have shaken public support for his government. Thursday's figures show Japan has not managed to pull out of its deepest economic slump in decades and throw into question Mori's ability to lead a turnaround.

Hit by concerns over the economy, Japanese stocks tumbled Thursday to their lowest level this year.

The benchmark 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average was down 2.33 percent to 13,055.00 at the end of the morning session.

The revisions, the largest made to GDP figures since 1978, indicate that corporate Japan is not making a significant contribution to getting the economy back on track.

Business investment increased 1.5 percent in the July-September quarter from the previous one—far weaker than the 7.8-percent growth in the preliminary data. The slower growth suggested that corporations, a driving force of the economy, were not investing in new equipment and machinery as aggressively as economists had believed.

Personal consumption remained flat from the previous quarter in the revised data, indicating that worries about a wobbly stock market and a wave of corporate restructuring continued to discourage consumers from spending.

Stagnant spending, which accounts for roughly 60 percent of GDP, has been a major drag on the economy.

Another cause for concern is a dwindling demand for Japanese products overseas as growth slows in the United States and Asia, Japan's biggest export markets. *AP*

近の動き（過去9ヶ月）
13106.31 −259

A JAPANESE businessman walks by a downtown stockbrokerage as an electronic screen displays a steep downward graph of Tokyo share prices. Stocks tumbled in Tokyo on concern that Japan's economic recovery was stalling. The benchmark 225-Issue Nikkei Stock Average lost 2.33 percent to 13,055.00 at the end of yesterday's morning session. AP

Japan set to mount sustainable recovery

SYDNEY—Japan's moribund economy was well-placed to mount a sustainable recovery over the next 12 months and withstand any global economic downturn, an Australian research report said yesterday.

On the same day as the release of revised data in Tokyo showing Japan's economy contracted 0.6 percent in the three months to September from the previous quarter, the Macquarie Research Equities study took a more upbeat view than many other recent assessments.

Macquarie Research Equities, a subsidiary of Macquarie Bank, found that factors such as a heavily discounted equities market, greater company transparency and the camouflaged recovery of household spending meant "Japan has the means to maintain a sustainable recovery this year."

Its report, entitled "Japan: The Sleeping Giant Stirs," found that "equities in Japan are heavily discounted."

It also suggests that official statistics indicating moribund household spending conceal spending growth in key market sectors.

Single person household spending has experienced a 4-percent year-on-year growth.

"Single member households are providing the main impetus to private consumption spending but the absence of full and accurate data on this cohort is a major impediment in assessing trends in underlying demand," the Macquarie report says.

"Given this failing, the current situation as measured by household sentiment is not as gloomy as it may otherwise appear," Macquarie Equities head of economics Richard Gibbs said.

"If household sector spending does accelerate, Japan will enter a sustainable recovery phase in 2001."

The report identified the recovery in winter bonus payments as an additional stimulus to consumer spending.

"Given that bonus fluctuations have a big impact on consumer sentiment, this solid recovery in the bonus component of household income will support consumer sentiment going forward."

Other positives for the Japanese economy include moves toward greater company transparency and accountability, which come into force in March, bolstering a very "cheap" share market.

"We believe the Japanese market is at a very discounted level, and it is very likely to turn around once the volatility, which is related to accounting standards change, settles," the report said.

However, "corporate restructuring is essential if the Japanese economy is to sustain an expansion at its estimated long-term potential growth rate of 1.5 to 2 percent," Gibbs said. *AFP*

US productivity up solidly, but unit-labor costs jump

WASHINGTON—The productivity of US workers grew at a solid pace in the final quarter of 2000 even as the economy cooled, but unit-labor costs climbed sharply, the government said Wednesday.

The productivity of non-farm workers rose at an annual rate of 2.4 percent in the fourth quarter, the Labor Department said. While that was considered a strong growth rate, it lagged the 3-percent gain in the third quarter.

"It is truly extraordinary to get this kind of productivity growth this late in the expansion or just ahead of a recession," said David Resler, chief economist at Nomura Securities International in New York.

"It is a sign the economy has moved to a higher level of productivity growth that justifies expectations of a higher long-run potential growth of 3.5 to 4 percent," Resler said of the productivity figures, which measure the amount of goods and services workers produce per hour.

In a piece of news that unsettled Wall Street, unit-labor costs shot up 4.1 percent in the October-December period, departing from the usual trend in which strong productivity usually holds down labor costs.

The Nasdaq composite index fell more than 2 percent, closing at 2,607.30 in a slide that was triggered by disappointing earnings by computer networking company Cisco Systems Inc.

Analysts said the unit-labor costs jump might lessen the odds that the Federal Reserve would act ahead of its March 20 meeting to cut interest rates. But since the unit-labor costs numbers bounce around from quarter to quarter, economists were not overly alarmed about an inflation threat.

"There's a lot of noise in these quarterly numbers," said John Ryding, an economist at Bear Stearns in New York.

Meanwhile, a report from the Fed underlined the softening in the economy. The Fed said consumer installment credit rose by $3 billion at a 2.4-percent annual rate, slowing sharply from a revised $13.9-billion jump in November when credit boomed ahead at an 11.1-percent rate.

The Fed said it was the smallest monthly credit rise since September 1999, when it increased by $1.78 billion.

The unit-labor costs data, in some ways, crystallized what has been troubling the stock market lately: worries about profit erosion as economic growth winds down but as corporate costs continue to rise.

But economists said that, on the whole, the productivity report was a mixed one, with some clearly good news in the 2.4 percent fourth-quarter productivity gain.

Stellar growth in productivity has been a hallmark of the record 10-year expansion popularized by the New Economy label.

But economists have widely expected productivity growth to decelerate now that the economy has cooled. Just how much it tapers off will be crucial to the outlook for inflation and corporate profits.

When worker productivity rises rapidly, companies can afford to give employees big pay raises without having to cut into profits or pass the costs along to consumers.

Looking back at 2000 overall, productivity soared 4.3 percent, the strongest rise since it grew 4.5 percent in 1983. *Reuters*

Fed exec says US economy not in recession

CHICAGO—Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago president Michael Moskow said Wednesday that while the US economic outlook for 2001 was "very uncertain," he did not think the world's largest economy was currently in a recession.

"It's very difficult to forecast this year, but my best guess is that we are not in a recession now," Moskow, who is a voting member of the central bank's rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee this year, told a group of Chicago business leaders. "There is not a broad-scaled decline in economic activity in the US."

Moskow said technological advances should help inventories fall back to acceptable levels more swiftly. He added that the Chicago Fed expected the pattern of economic growth in 2001 to be the reverse of the boom-to-slowdown path of 2000, with a slower first half followed by a stronger second half.

It was too soon to tell whether the Fed's two interest rate cuts in January, which amounted to a full percentage point, had had any measurable impact on the economy, he added.

"It takes six months. It could take nine months. What you don't know is what impact it has on people's thinking," Moskow said. He declined to comment on the fact that the fed funds futures markets—where investors trade on the basis of the outlook for interest rates—was pricing in another half-point cut in rates.

The FOMC's next meeting is scheduled on March 20.

The Chicago Fed chief said last year the Fed had initially expected the economy to move to a more sustainable rate of growth as the year wound on, but that the economy "downshifted more sharply and quickly than anticipated." *Reuters*

FOREIGN BRIEFS

26 more Firestone fatalities

WASHINGTON—Twenty-six more fatalities from accidents involving Firestone tires have been reported to a US government agency, increasing the toll to 174.

The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration revised its data Tuesday, in part due to submissions by Safetyforum.com, which was involved in lawsuits against the tiremaker and Ford Motor Co. *AP*

Disney interested in Yahoo

LOS ANGELES—Disney chair Michael Eisner has acknowledged that his sprawling media company is interested in buying Yahoo, the Internet's leading portal, if the price is right.

"Yahoo is a great company," Eisner told analysts late Tuesday in response to a question about a takeover. "The problem is it's just overvalued." *AFP*

BHP says profits up 18%

SYDNEY—Australian resources giant BHP Ltd. said it would buy back up to 90 million shares from the market after it posted a record net profit Thursday for the six months to Dec. 31.

A statement issued by the diversified resources heavyweight said the company's half-year profit result of A$1.427 billion ($785 million) represented an 18-percent increase over the result for the corresponding period in 1999. *AFP*

Barnesandnoble reports losses

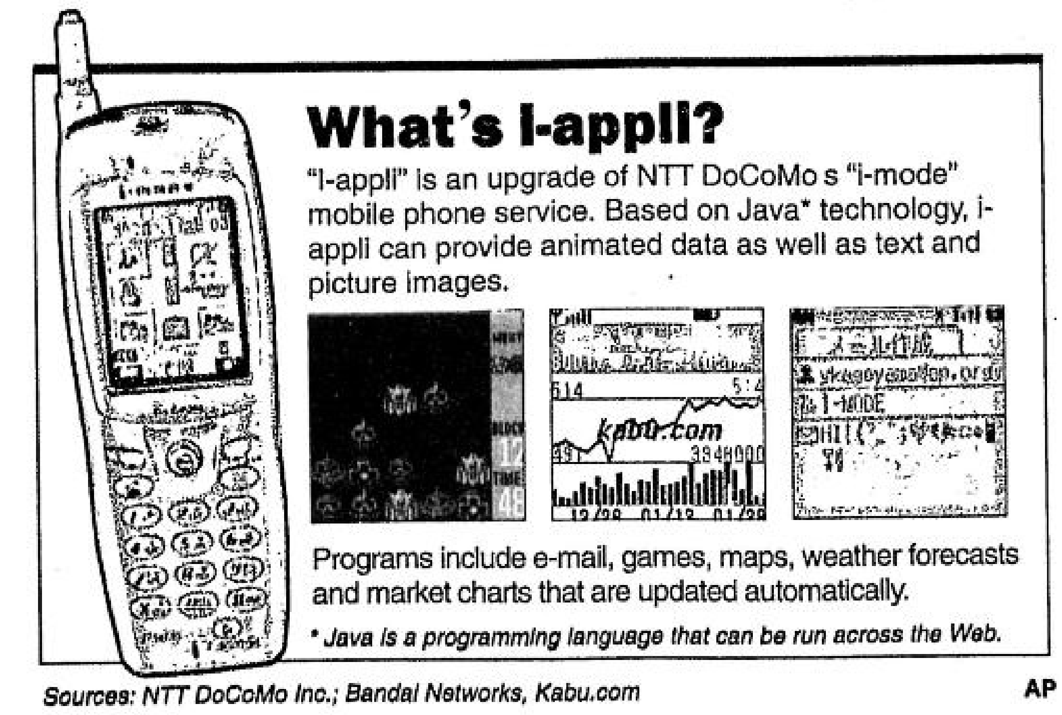
NEW YORK—Online bookseller Barnesandnoble.com reported a greater-than-expected fourth-quarter loss, and announced it would lay off 350 employees, or roughly 16 percent of its work force.

For the quarter ending Dec. 31, Barnesandnoble.com had a net loss of $138.1 million, or 91 cents a share, compared with a loss of $38.4 million, or 27 cents a share during the same period last year, the company said Wednesday. *AP*

Amazon to charge publishers

SEATTLE—Amazon.com plans to accept payments from publishers in exchange for a better chance of getting their books recommended in electronic mailings sent to customers of the online retailer.

Previously, Amazon's book editors were solely responsible for choosing e-mail recommendations. In the new system, books nominated by publishers would be reviewed by the editors, who would make the final decisions, company officials said Wednesday. The editors will continue to recommend some books without charging a fee. *AP*



What's I-appli?

"I-appli" is an upgrade of NTT DoCoMo s "i-mode" mobile phone service. Based on Java* technology, i-appli can provide animated data as well as text and picture images.

Programs include e-mail, games, maps, weather forecasts and market charts that are updated automatically.

** Java is a programming language that can be run across the Web.*

Sources: NTT DoCoMo Inc.; Bandal Networks, Kabu.com AP

Australian jobless rate rose slightly in January

CANBERRA, Australia—Australia's unemployment rate rose slightly in January as the economy shed large numbers of full-time jobs that were only partly replaced by a rise in new part-time employment, a report said yesterday.

The unemployment rate moved up to 6.7 percent from 6.6 percent in December. The figures are adjusted to correct for seasonal variations.

The report by the government statistics bureau said 44,000 more Australians were looking for full-time work in January, while part-time jobs rose by 40,600.

The report comes just a day after the central bank cut its benchmark overnight cash rate a half percentage point to 5.75 percent.

While the Reserve Bank cited slowing US growth and the need to support the domestic economy, it did not mention fears over jobs growth.

"The result is in line with market expectations and yesterday's statement by the governor of the Reserve Bank," Employment Minister Tony Abbott said in a statement.

Abbott emphasized that in the last year, employment has grown by 179,800 or 2 percent.

He added the report confirms the need for the government to push ahead with its workplace reform agenda, aimed at creating a more flexible labor market. *AP*

Lucent chip to lessen cell phone cost

SAN JOSE, California—Lucent Technologies Inc. announced Wednesday a breakthrough it hoped would improve the quality and lessen the cost of wireless networks.

Researchers in Lucent's Bell Labs have created what they believe are the first all-silicon chips for the receivers in base stations that get radio signals from mobile devices, such as cell phones or handheld computers.

The receivers generally in use now have 10 to 20 chips made of gallium arsenide, which has been considered the best material to handle a wireless network's complicated tasks.

Lucent said its new system, which employed just three silicon chips, was 100 times smaller. The pure silicon chips also were 10 to 100 times less expensive.

Anti-WTO protesters turn to hacking

GENEVA—The technicians at the World Trade Organization got a bit suspicious when "journalists" in an online press conference went by screen names like "NO-TO-WTO."

Still, WTO Director General Mike Moore gamely answered all questions thrown at him—until he was knocked off-line by anti-globalization protesters with excellent computer skills.

This week, similarly motivated "hacktivists" grabbed headlines, announcing they'd collected credit card and other personal data on some 1,400 business and political leaders by breaking into the database of last month's World Economic Forum.

Increasingly, social activists have turned to hacking to make their point, breaking into computer systems and wreaking havoc on organizations they oppose. The Internet has turned out to be a remarkable tool for nonviolent protest on a scale activists could only dream of before.

The term "hacktivist" was first applied to supporters of the Zapatista rebels in Mexico's southern state of Chiapas, who have sabotaged Mexican government websites since 1998 and have held "virtual sit-ins" designed to overload servers.

More recently, the tactic has been used in Serbia, Pakistan and India—and by both Palestinians and Israelis in the Middle East. In one case, Palestinian sympathizers broke into a website operated by a pro-Israel lobbying group in the United States, stealing credit card information and e-mail addresses.

The theft of private data is a relatively new tactic, however, that goes beyond defacing websites and electronic bombardment of servers.

Anti-globalist protesters contend the WTO's trade treaties benefit big corporations and rich countries at the expense of the environment and workers. They consider the World Economic Forum, which holds its high-profile annual meetings in the Swiss resort of Davos, to epitomize the elitist deal-making they oppose.

Protesters who showed up in person were largely stymied by a heavy police presence at last month's Davos meeting. Online, however, they effectively surmounted physical barriers.

The Net "is another frontier for people to engage in these types of activities," said Joel Scambray, a security analyst at Foundstone Inc.

The attacks against forum organizers showed just how far hacktivists could reach: They obtained the travel itineraries—including flight numbers—of politicians from around the world, and published them on the Web.

"This poses operational security problems (and) goes beyond what we've seen before," said Kent Anderson, vice president of computer security with the London-based Control Risks Group.

Almost every major corporation and organization has been hit at one time or another by hacking, with McDonald's, Starbucks and the WTO favorite targets of hacktivists.

During the WTO's last major meeting, in Seattle in December 1999, the organization faced attempts to shut down its system. *AP*

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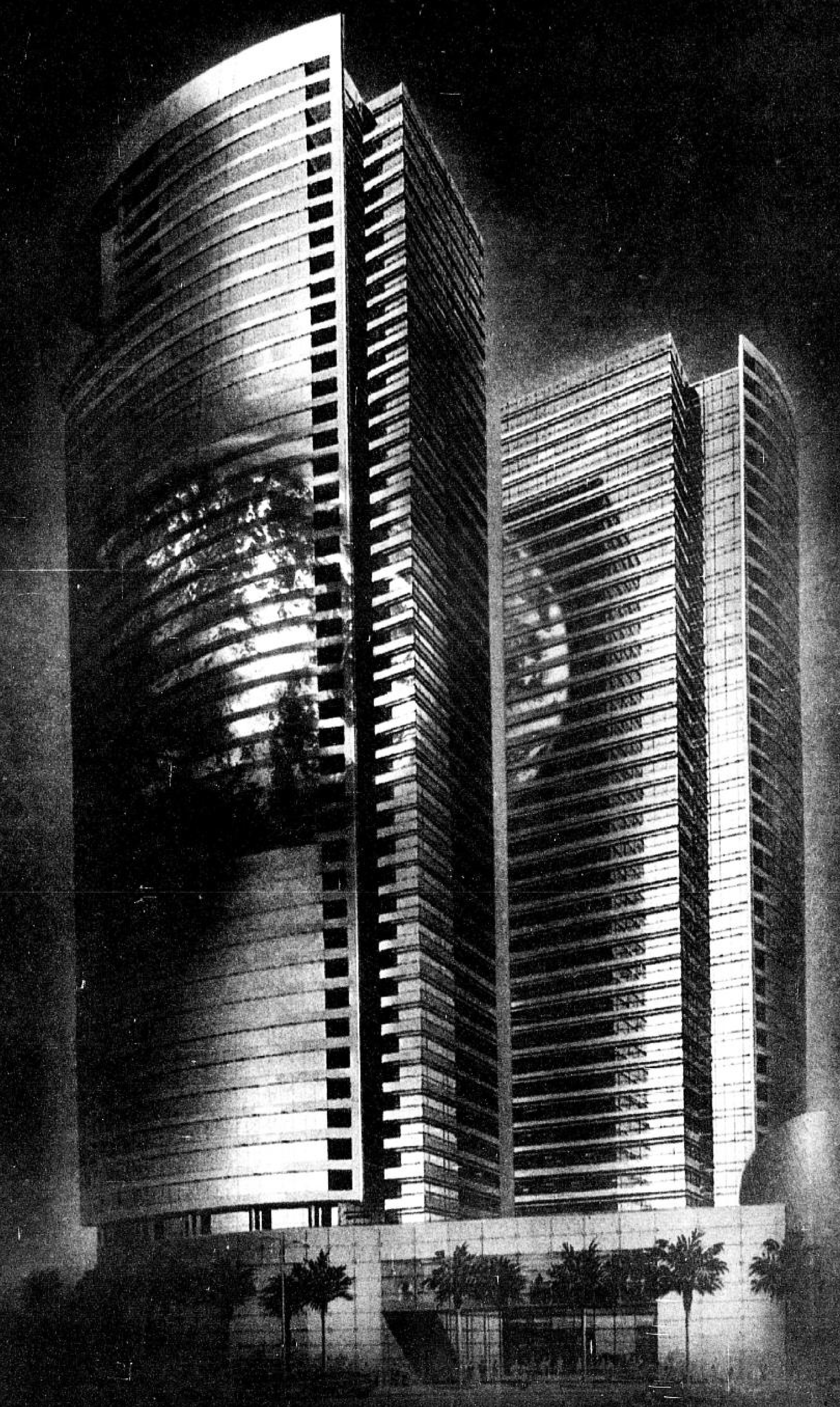
Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco



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AGAPITO SABINO PONGOS

Born on August 18, 1906

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 7, 2001 at the age of 94 to join his wife Ramona Con-Ui in their heavenly abode.

His children **Eduardo C. Pongos, Cecilia Pongos Tan, Rodolfo C. Pongos, Virginia Pongos Espina, Milagros Pongos Capahi & Agapito (Yong Yong) C. Pongos**; in-laws **Amelia Y. Pongos, Gregorio P. Tan, Lorna Pongos, Rustico Capahi, Jr. & Norma B. Pongos**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, and other relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Pongos Hotel, Bonifacio Street, Ormoc City, Leyte.

Interment will be announced later.

---

*"To be absent from the body
is to be present with the Lord."*
2 Corinthian 5:8

Hon. BIENVENIDO O. MARQUEZ, JR.

**Former Assemblyman, Deputy Minister (DENR)
And Congressman**

Peacefully joined his Creator on the 6th day of February 2001 at the age of 53.

He shall be fondly remembered by his loving wife **LINDA**; children **LAICA, RINA** and **BENJO**; siblings **VICTOR, MA. GENOVEVA, MA. ROSARIO, RAMON & JOSE** and stepmother **MILAGROS**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Santuario de San Jose Parish Church, East Greenhills.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park in Parañaque on February 11, 2001 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

OUR DEAREST MOTHER

ADELA (APUNG BADING) DELA CRUZ Vda. De HALILI

of Mabalacat, Pampanga

Peacefully joined her Creator on February 7, 2001 at the age of 90.

Her loving brother **Ernesto dela Cruz**; children ex-mayor **Fred Halili** and **Rose**, **Tars Halili** and **Lu**, **Conching** and **Earl**, **Nora** and **Pio Lao**; grandchildren **Edgar, Anthony, Chiqui, Christian, Joy** and **Lene, Jay, Joyce, Clifford, Mark, Sherwin, Gem-Gem**; great grandson **Jonah Mizael (TJ)**; relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at HALILI Compound, Sta. Ines, Mabalacat, Pampanga. Interment will be on Sunday, February 11, 2001, Old Municipal Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Towns Parish Church.

GERARDO R. ULIBARRI

(Retired Fiscal Q.C.)

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 7, 2001 at the age of 73.

He is survived by his bereaved wife **Leticia**; children **Gerardo Jr.** and **Claire**, **Bess** and **June**, **Ken** and **Binday**, **Munding** and **Luz**, **Chris** and **Maribel**; brothers and sisters.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel at Guadalupe, Makati City.

After the 9:00 a.m. Mass, interment will follow at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Quezon City on February 15, 2001.

---

*"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life and I shall live
in the house of the Lord forever."*
Psalm 23:6

CHRISTIAN DUKE S. PIZARRO

*November 18, 1983 - February 5, 2001,
17 years old.*

His loving parents **JUN** and **ADETTE**; brother **DONKING**; grandparents, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Chapel inside the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 10, 2001 at 10:00 a.m. immediately after the Mass.

---

*Heavenly Father, thank you for daddy
for he loved us so much that through him
we know your goodness, kindness, and love!*

Major (Ret.) ALBERTO "NENE" SALAS YULO (USAFFE)

August 6, 1919 – February 6, 2001

His wife **Pilaring**; children and in-laws Sister **Regivic, Toffee, Prandy** and **Chiqui, Butch** and **Mylene, Sandra** and **Mel, Peachy** and **Winston, Felice** and **Tim**; grandchildren **John Harold, Tanya, Ali, Chino, Niño, Hannah, Tasha, Chrissie, Chia, Misha & Czarina**; relatives and friends mourn his passing and praise our Lord for his eternal rest with Him.

His remains lie in state at St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Chapel 4 in Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 10, 2001 at the Garden of the Risen Christ beside the Church of Magallanes after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

DR. CESAR A. LUNA

of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro

Died on February 6, 2001 at the age of 84.

His bereaved wife **Nita**; his children **Lulu** (†), **Joe** and **Vicky**, **Jun** and **Lina**, **Dolly** and **Jess**, **Terry**, **Anthony** and **Eva**, **Johnny** and **Lanie**, **Kay**, **Joycelyn** and **Joe**, **Ferdie** and **Rowena**, **Mimay** and **John**, **Michael**; his grandchildren **Joseph, Stan, Jessica, Tami, Kristine, Mara, Marty, Matthi, Ciari, Ricci, Nucci, Christopher** and **Thomas** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Rita Parish Church, Philamlife Homes, Quezon City. Interment will follow the scheduled funeral Mass at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 11, 2001.

DRA. CANDELARIA (ANDING) CASTRO AGCAOILI

FINAL BURIAL ARRANGEMENT

HER BODY WILL LIE IN STATE AT LA FUNERARIA PAZ UNTIL 10 FEBRUARY 2001 AND WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO RIZAL, LAGUNA ON 11 FEBRUARY 2001.

INTERMENT WILL BE ON 14 FEBRUARY 2001 AT 10:00 AM IN RIZAL, LAGUNA.

We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God.
2 Cor. 4:14

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Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again.
2 Cor. 4:14

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(NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION)

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

AD NO. PD 2001-08

Rebidding Date : February 16, 2001 - 10:00 a.m.

PB010202-T3JR5785(PB2)	**LIQUIFIED PETROLEUM GAS** in 50 kgs, Standard Cylinder
PB010202-T3JR5784(PB2)	**CARBIDE INSERTS/TOOL HOLDER**
PB010202-T3JR5787(PB2)	**ENGINE ASSEMBLY/OVERHAULING GASKET** for 4D56 Mitsubishi Pajero
PB010202-T3JR5752(PB2)	**AUTOMOTIVE SPARE PARTS FOR** Mazda Pick-Up (Shock Absorber, Wiper Blade, etc.)
PB010202-T3JR5781(PB2)	**TIRES**, 10.00-R20x16 ply with inner tube/ROPE
PB010202-T2JD5748(PB2)	**COLIFORM MEDIA**
PB010202-T3JR5782(PB2)	**TV, GAS STOVE, MICROWAVE OVEN**, etc.
PB010202-T3WG5786(PB2)	**SERVICES**: Labor, materials and equipment for the fabrication/ replacement of steel louvers per attached plan/drawing
PB010119-T2JD5725(PB2)	**TRACING PAPER**, transparent

****Bidding Date : February 26, 2001 - 10:00 a.m.**

2001-08-01	**SWITCHBOARD/MAGNET WIRE**, copper, various sizes
2001-08-02	**PAINT/PRESS BOARD/SEALANT/PENETRATING OIL**
2001-08-03	**SPARE PARTS FOR AIRCONDITIONING UNIT** (Capacitor, Fan motor, Filter drier, Compressor, Valve, Refrigerant)
2001-08-04	**ELECTRODE HOLDER/CUTTING TIP**, various tip sizes
2001-08-05	**ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES** (Fluorescent fixture, wire, wall plate, circuit breaker)
2001-08-06	**VACUUM PUMP** for BN-25 Islander RP-766
2001-08-07	**SWIMMING POOL CHEMICALS**
2001-08-08	**SPORTS UNIFORM** for GCAA Duckpin/Tennis Tournament with NPC & GCAA Logo

Interested parties are invited to prequalify and to submit sealed bids on the above to be opened publicly at the Sampaguita Rm. Ground Floor Bldg. 2, NPC- OBC, Quezon Ave. cor. Agham Rd. Diliman, Quezon City.

Accreditation forms can be obtained from Mondays thru Fridays at the Accreditation and Bidding Support Services, Materials Management Department, Ground Floor, Bldg. 2 upon payment of **P50.00**, submission of company's TIN and proof of listing at the telephone directory. **Deadline for submission of duly accomplished forms on **February 15, 2001**.

Bidding documents available on **February 9, 2001 upon payment of P50.00 which is non-refundable**, presentation of original Certificate of Accreditation and supplier's number (DCE). **Last day of issuance of bidding documents **February 21, 2001**.

Issuance of accreditation forms and bidding documents **mornings only, 8:30 to 11:30 AM.** For inquiries, please call no. 921-2574.

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation.

MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
NPC-OBC (Head Office)
Diliman, Quezon City

(PDI - Feb 8 & 9, 2001)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Almeda Bldg. Roxas Blvd. cor. San Luis St.,
Pasay City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. 551-3443; 891-6423

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL FOR THE OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE OF MACTAN ECONOMIC ZONE (MEZ) ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites all qualified applicants to pre-qualify and submit technical and price proposals for the Operation and Maintenance Services requirements of the electrical distribution system of Mactan Economic Zone located in Mactan Island, Cebu.

Pre-qualification documents are available for issuance to prospective applicants at the following address:

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
BAC - Infrastructure
3rd Floor, Almeda Bldg., Roxas Blvd. cor. San Luis St.,
Pasay City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. 551-3443; 891-6423

upon presentation of original or certified true copy of SEC Registration and/or DTI Registration. Documents may be obtained upon payment of non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 up to 23 February 2001.

Four (4) copies of the duly accomplished pre-qualification statement & bid proposal together with all other requirements shall be submitted to the BAC Secretariat on or before 5:00 p.m. of **05 March 2001.**

PEZA reserves the right to reject any application or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any defect or informality therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids, and will entertain only such bid/s established to be the most advantageous to PEZA.

Applicants will be advised in due course, of the results of their applications.

CHAIRMAN
BAC-Infrastructure

(PDI - Feb. 9, 16 & 22, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
OLD NAWASA BLDG. ☐ 176 ARROCEROS STREET ☐ 1000 MANILA, PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The Office of the Ombudsman is inviting prospective bidders to prequalify and to bid for the following:

LOT A	COMPUTER UNITS	
	11 units	Computer, Intel Pentium III w/ 14" Color Monitor
	03 units	Computer, Intel Pentium III w/ 14" Paperwhite Monitor
	07 units	Laser Printer
	07 units	Dot Matrix Printer
LOT B	DRINKING WATER	
	One year supplies of Purified/Mineral Drinking Water	
	36 btls.	of 5 gallons capacity for daily use w/ Hot and Cold Dispenser per btl.

Pre-qualification forms and other requirement may be secured from the Property Management Section/General Services Division, Ground Floor, 176 Old NAWASA Building, Arroceros Street, Manila.

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING

1. Pre-Bid Conference - **13 February 2001@9:30 AM**
2. Deadline of Submission:
   a. Pre-Qualification Requirement - **16 February 2001@4:00 PM**
   b. Technical & Financial Proposal - **27 February 2001@9:00 AM**
3. Opening of Bids
   a. Technical & Financial - **27 February 2001@9:30 AM**

Bid documents will be issued upon payment of non-refundable bidding fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

Financial proposal shall be accompanied by a bidder's bond either in the form of GSIS Bond, Cashier/Manager's Check and or Cash Bond of at least 2.5% of the total bid price.

The Office of the Ombudsman reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive and defect or informality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss that they may incur in the preparation of their bid and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Office.

(Sgd.) **ROMEO I. TAN**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Feb. 9, 10 & 11, 2001)

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DUTY FREE

INVITATION TO BID

Duty Free Philippines, a division of the Philippine Tourism Authority is inviting interested buyers to bid for the sale of the following unserviceable properties as follows on "AS-IS-WHERE-IS-BASIS".

7 SETS ALENAIRE ACCU/AHU (3 SINGLE CIRCUIT AND 4 DOUBLE CIRCUIT)

Air Handling Units	
Capacity	30 TR
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FLA	20A
Air Cooled Condensing Units	
Condenser Motor	2-3 HP
Compressor Motor	2-15 TR, 220V, 3 Phase, 60Hz
2 units CATERPILLAR Diesel Generator	
Model	3412
Rating	750KVA, 220V, 3 Phase, 60Hz
Speed	1800rpm
Operating Hours	91 Hours

All interested parties may secure pre-qualification form for a non-purchasing fee of ONE HUNDRED PESOS (P100.00) on February 12-14, 2001 from the Purchasing Department, Duty Free Philippines, New Fiestamall, Columbia Center, Ninoy Aquino Avenue, Parañaque City. Submission of duly accomplished pre-qualification form will be until **February 19, 2001**. All pre-qualified contractors shall be informed on the pre-bidding conference schedule and site inspection.

Bidders will be required to post a bid bond equivalent to Ten Percent (10%) of the total contract price in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or Cashier's Check.

Duty Free Philippines reserves the right to confiscate the bid bond should the winning bidder refuses to accept his award. Further, DFP reserves the right to reject any or all the bids or any part thereof, waive any defects contained therein and accept an offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) JOEL R. PEREZ
Chairman
Disposal Committee

(PDI - Feb. 9, 10 & 11, 2001)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON, KULTURA AT ISPORTS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS
DECS Complex, Meralco Avenue
Pasig City, Philippines

Tanggapan ng Kalihim
Office of the Secretary

PHILIPPINES 2000
Sama-Sama sa DECS

INVITATION TO BID

The Department of Education, Culture and Sports is inviting all DECS accredited Janitorial Agencies for the bidding of Janitorial Services for the DECS Central Office Year 2001.

All interested agencies must submit a Letter of Intent before obtaining bid documents starting February 7 to 14, 2001 at the PBAC Secretariat Office, Rm 112 A, Mabibi Bldg., ULTRA Complex, Pasig City.

A pre-bid conference will be held on February 27, 2001, 10:00 AM at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Bldg. I, ULTRA Complex, Pasig City. The Submission and Opening of Bids will be on March 7, 2001 at the same time and place mentioned above.

DECS-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **RAMON C. BACANI**
Undersecretary
Vice-Chairman, DECS-BAC

(PDI--Feb. 7, 8 & 9, 2001)

OBITUARIES

For inquiries, call 897-2535

ATTY. ISAGANI GUTIERREZ DANTA

of #10 St. Mark St., Phase 1-C Pacita Complex I, San Pedro, Laguna and San Pablo City

Died peacefully at the age of 66 on February 6, 2001

Former Chief Law Division
Bureau of Custom

Beloved wife: **Lourdes**
Children: **Sirikit** and **Edwin**, **Peeay**, **Jun** and **Erlyne**, and **Atty. Bong**
Grandchildren: **Jopao**, **Ian** and **Gigi**
Mother: **Luz**
Sister: **Daisy**

Interment will be on Saturday, February 10, 2001 at 9:00 a.m. at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Sto. Rosario Parish Pacita Complex, San Pedro, Laguna.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

JUAN J. TUERES, JR.

Who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on January 18, 2001

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

Our Beloved Tatay

VICTOR M. ALMADRO, Sr.

Peacefully joined his Creator on 07 February 2001, at the age of 86.

> *He left us a legacy of righteousness, excellence in our work, honesty and integrity.*

His bereaved wife **Tiyang**; children **Dora** and **Oseelyn Legita**, **Elsie** and **Pergent Arpon**, **Nene** (†) and **Boy Castañeda**, **Lydia** and **Romy Bigornia**, **Sylvia** (†), **Victor Jr.**, **Ruben** and **Maru**, **Myrna** and **Roi Alonzo**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious reader to offer prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body now lies in state at the family residence in L'Nido Village, Tacloban City and will be transferred to the ancestral home in Cabucgayan, Biliran on Friday morning.

Interment will be on Sunday, 11 February 2001 at The Almadro Estate, Rawis, Cabucgayan, Biliran after an early morning Mass at the San Francisco de Borja Parish Church, Cabucgayan, Biliran.

ALFONSO RAYMUNDO "AL" FRANCISCO MARTINEZ

Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 7, 2001 at the age of 33.

His wife **Sharon**; children **Alexa**, **Axel** and **Aljon**; mother **Ma. Teresita**; parents-in-law **Domy** and **Josie**; brothers and sisters **Leo** and **Gina**, **Gil** and **Mers**, **Rachelle**, **Jack** and **Rachel**, **Ichi** and **Toro**, **Ichay** and **Ted**, **Ner**, **Baby** and **Jerry**, **Gadet**, **Adrian** and **Joie**, and **Anthony**; sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, nephews, nieces and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for his soul.

His remains lie in state at Love, Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Aranata Avenue, Quezon City.

Holy Mass will be celebrated daily at 8:00 p.m. until his cremation on Sunday, February 11, 2001 at the La Funeraria Paz Crematory after the 11:00 a.m. Mass at the Arlington Memorial Chapels.

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Region VII
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
2nd Floor, WDC Bldg., P. Burgos & Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City
Tel. Nos.: 254-6595; 255-7138; 255-7488

NOTICE OF COVERAGE BY PUBLICATION

Pursuant to Section 7 of R.A. 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, notice is hereby given that the landholdings herein described below are now covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, to wit:

I - REGISTERED OWNER : Maria Camara
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-55960
LOT NUMBER : 31-A
AREA : 9.4410 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 15-25689
LOCATION : Corte, Carmen, Cebu City

II - REGISTERED OWNER : Maria Camara
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-55952
LOT NUMBER : 12-A
AREA : 15.7063 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 15-25690
LOCATION : Corte, Carmen, Cebu City

III - REGISTERED OWNER : Carmen Camara
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-55958
LOT NUMBER : 25-B
AREA : 8.9050 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 15-25678
LOCATION : Corte, Carmen, Cebu City

IV - REGISTERED OWNER : Carmen Camara
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-55955
LOT NUMBER : 12-D
AREA : 15.4440 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 15-25679
LOCATION : Corte, Carmen, Cebu City

V - REGISTERED OWNER : Jesus Camara
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-55961
LOT NUMBER : 31-B
AREA : 9.5952 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 15-25687
LOCATION : Corte, Carmen, Cebu City

VI - REGISTERED OWNER : Jesus Camara
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-55953
LOT NUMBER : 12-B
AREA : 19.7288 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 15-25688
LOCATION : Corte, Carmen, Cebu City

VII - REGISTERED OWNER : Sps. Hermenegildo Pacaña & Teofisto Romo de Pacaña
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-7558
LOT NUMBER : 5119
AREA : 29.1071 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 01762
LOCATION : Budbud, Barili, Cebu

VIII - REGISTERED OWNER : Enrique T. Tan, Jr.
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-98192
LOT NUMBER : Plan PSU-107288
AREA : 50.7769 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 3301000145
3301300584
3301100013
3301700273
LOCATION : Duangan, Pinamungahan, Cebu

IX - REGISTERED OWNER : Norma G. Tan, Yolanda N. Tan, Rodolfo G. Tan & Victor Tan
TITLE NUMBER : TCT-58433
LOT NUMBER : 5209
AREA : 52.1168 has.
TAX DEC. NO. : 13325-A
LOCATION : Vito, Balamban, Cebu

Notices were sent to the aforementioned landowners on their last known addresses thru Registered Mail via Philippine Postal Service but the same were returned, thus this Notice is resorted to by Publication.

Cebu City, Philippines, January 9, 2001.

(Sgd.) VIRGILIO I. ALCOMENDRAS
Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer II

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given to the public that Membership Certificate Number 1836 for 100 units of the Manila Golf & Country Club, Inc. issued in the name of Eastern Shipping Lines, Inc. has been reported lost.

If within one year from the date of the last publication of this notice no contest is presented, said certificate shall be cancelled and in lieu thereof, a new Membership Certificate will be issued.

MANILA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB, INC.
(PDI – Jan. 26, Feb 2 & 9, 2001)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Let it be known that ROSARIO GEuLEN/ ROSARIO SING TAN, 53 yrs old, native born in the Phil., residing at Anda, Bohol, married to James T. Geulen, lost her ICR. This publishing serves as a requirement for the reapplication thereof. (PDI-Feb. 9 &16, 2001)

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late JUANITO RAMIREZ IGNACIO was extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc.107, Page 22, Book II, Series 2000 before Notary Public Peter Irving Corvera, Muntinlupa City
PDI-Feb. 2, 9 & 16, 2001

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dia logue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no mat ter how great the material desires maybe. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen. - J.D.

NOVENA PRAYER TO ST. JUDE
O, HOLY ST. JUDE apostle and martyr, great in virtue, rich in miracles, near in kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present, urgent petition (make your request). In return, I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. Saint Jude, pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Pray this nine times a day for nine consecutive days. On the eighth day your prayers will be answered, for this prayer has never known to fail. Please don't forget to publish this once your wish is granted.

SUMMONS - FAMILY LAW

CITATION JUDICIAL
NOTICE TO RESPONDENT: ROWENA GOMEZ
YOU ARE BEING SUED
PETITIONERS NAME IS: JOMAR GOMEZ
CASE NUMBER : FFL057015

You have **30 CALENDAR YEAR DAYS** after this Summons and Petition served on you to file a Response (form 1282) at the court and serve a copy on the petitioner. A letter or phone call will not protect you. If you do not file your Response on time, the court may make orders affecting your marriage, your property, and custody of your children. You may be ordered to pay support and attorney fees and costs. If you cannot pay the filling fee, ask the clerk for a fee waiver form. If you want legal advice, contact a lawyer immediately.

NOTICE: The restraining orders on the back are affective against both husband and wife until the petition is dismissed, a judgment is entered or the court makes further orders. These orders are enforceable anywhere in California by any law enforcement officer who has received or seen a copy of them.

1. The name and address of the court is:
   SOLANO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
   600 UNION AVENUE
   FAIRFIELD, CA 94533
2. The name, address, and telephone number of petitioner's attorney, or petitioner without an attorney, is:
   JOMAR GOMEZ
   105 DEL RIO CIR. UNIT #1
   VACAVILLE, CA 95687
   (707) 469-8700

Date: December 19, 2000
CHARLES D. RAMSEY
Clerk, by V. Lee, Deputy
(PDI - Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9 & 16, 2001)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be informed of our new classified advertising rates effective **February 1, 2001 issue.**

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
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TV: Conforming to commercial realities

BY MARK ANTHONY P. TAMAYO
SGV & Co.

(First of a series)

TAX-FILES

BUSINESS entities heavily engaged in global trade ought to know the import rules in the Philippines if they want to bring down their costs and make their prices competitive.

As a signatory to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1994 and a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Philippines basically adheres to the concept of "free for all competition."

Trade liberalization, however, requires a transparent and predictable international trading environment.

The WTO valuation agreement laid down the rules and guidelines on how members of the WTO shall determine customs value—the value of imported merchandise for the purpose of assessing customs duties and taxes to be paid on such merchandise.

The agreement mandated the adoption of the "transaction value" (TV) system as the basis for customs appraisal. The TV system is precisely intended to prohibit arbitrary or fictitious values for duties and instead, provide a uniform, predictable and neutral valuation system that conforms to commercial realities.

A system that is unpredictable or unfair to exporters serves as a non-tariff barrier to trade and undermines the effects of tariff reductions.

The TV valuation system took effect last Jan. 1, 2000 by virtue of Republic Act No. 8181 and is implemented by Customs Administrative Order (CAO) No. 2-99. Since this valuation system is relatively new in the Philippines, there is a dearth of local jurisprudence on certain matters involving issues on valuation.

Consequently, the author has referred principally to the WTO valuation agreement, agreement on implementation of Article VII of the GATT (customs valuation code), interpretative notes, US customs headquarters rulings issued by the office of regulations and rulings, US judicial precedents and treasury decisions in this discussion.

The TV, as the primary method of customs valuation, was defined under RA 8181 as the price actually paid or payable for the goods when sold for export to the Philippines.

It is different from previously adopted systems such as the export value (EV) which is similar to the Brussels Definition of Value, or the home consumption value (HCV) which is equated to fair market value.

Under the EV system, the goods are valued based on past or parallel transactions involving similar articles. The Bureau of Customs uses the previous price instead of the actual price used by the buyer and the seller. The EV values are, therefore, based on a "notional" or "theoretical" valuation.

The HCV, on the other hand, is based on the domestic wholesale price of the goods that are being imported as sold in the domestic market in the country of supply.

HCV does not refer to the cost of the export transaction between the importer and the supplier. It refers to the normal cost of the imported item in the domestic market of the country of export, which may or may not have any relation to the actual transaction between the importer and the supplier.

Under the TV, the price actually paid or payable is the total payment made or to be made by the buyer to or for the benefit of the seller for the imported goods. The payment need not necessarily take the form of a transfer of money. Payment may be made by way of letters of credit or negotiable instruments. Payment may also be made directly or indirectly.

An example of an indirect payment would be the settlement by the buyer, whether in whole or in part, of a debt owned by the seller.

The TV system looks primarily at the price agreed upon between the seller and the buyer—a price that is generally shown on the invoice—with certain adjustments because the WTO agreement recognizes that in any international transaction, there may be several components that make up the total cost.

The TV should, therefore, also include additions for certain elements or costs that may not have been included in the price or invoice. In this sense, the TV is not necessarily equal to the invoice value, unless the invoice reflects all the dutiable elements.

Elements subject to duties

Traditionally, the basis for imposing duties is the sum of its CIF (cost, insurance and freight) and other handling charges associated with the transport of imported goods from the country of exportation to the port of entry in the Philippines.

Prior to the TV system, the cost component of the duty base was based on the HCV (until July 1996), and later on the EV (until December 1999) of the imported goods.

Under the TV system, however, the cost component is the price actually paid or payable by the buyer to the seller including certain adjustments paid by the buyer but was not included in the price. These include:

Commissions and brokerage fees. Selling commissions incurred by the buyer with respect to the imported merchandise constitutes part of the TV. On the other hand, buying commissions are not included since the buyer usually pays his agent a fee that is independent of the payment for the goods.

The buying commission, however, cannot be deducted if it is already included in the price. Brokerage fees, on the other hand, will be normally included in the invoice price as part of the price actually paid or payable if paid by the seller.

Cost of containers and packing. The value of these items refers to the cost incurred by the buyer of goods rather than their actual values. Re-usable pallets and containers such as 20- and 40- foot shipping containers, aircraft pallets, and the familiar wooden pallets on which cargo is often stacked, strapped or shrink-wrapped for ease of handling by forklift trucks cannot form part of the customs value of the goods. ***(To be continued)***

Firm changes logo to fit new suit it is sporting

BY TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

MARKETING STRATEGY

MAKING people aware that Sun Life of Canada is more than just a life insurance firm was one of the motivations behind the group's decision to change its logo and embark on an aggressive marketing campaign to reach out to new customers and stay in touch with old ones.

From a simple logo with the letter "S" set on a red background, Sun Life chose the symbol of the globe combined with the sun. Sun Life says it wanted a logo that would stand out, especially since there were already too many companies using red as the primary color.

Together with the change in logo was the change in the firm's name to Sun Life Financial.

Alex S. Narciso, Sun Life Philippines director for marketing, says previous studies conducted by the head office in Canada show there was clutter in the market. There were just too many companies using red and it turned out that not all markets liked the color red.

There were not too many companies, on the other hand, that were using yellow in their logos and since it complimented the symbol of the sun, they readily used yellow as the dominant color.

But more than just the aesthetics, Sun Life chair and chief executive Donald A. Stewart explains that the change in logo is just part of the group's strategy to position itself as a financial services company.

Stewart said Sun Life would like to be known as a company that offers not only life insurance but a full range of services designed to meet customers' lifetime financial needs.

"At the center of our identity is a symbol of a globe combined with the sun. The sun is a powerful universal symbol with a unique focus on growth, excellence and integrity. The globe symbolizes our international reach, speaks to our diversity and the value we place on partnerships," Stewart says.

The sun was supposed to represent Sun Life's heritage—symbolizing growth, energy and integrity. The globe, on the other hand, represents the international reach and the diversity of people and products.

"Our new identity is powerful and visible. It reflects pride in ourselves and commitment in our future. It is the foundation of our brand," he says.

Sun Life Financial

Narciso says the Philippine operations took advantage of the global campaign to build the awareness in the local market that Sun Life is also involved in selling mutual fund products and is also set to enter the preneed industry.

Narciso says the market easily accepted the change in logo and the more aggressive campaign as it generated a lot of goodwill following the demutualization efforts last year. The listing of the Sun Life Philippines operations in the Philippine Stock Exchange further built on the credibility of the group.

"We are now putting together a plan to launch the second phase of the marketing campaign and it will involve a lot of sponsorships and advertisements in print and broadcast," he says.

Narciso says Sun Life Philippines has not yet finalized the local campaign but says it will likely focus on youth development, thus, mirroring the positioning campaign of Sun Life in Canada.

Sun Life is banking on the marketing campaign and increased efforts to support the sales group to again post a banner year this year.

Sun Life Philippines recorded its best year last year on the back of a success of a demutualization program wherein policyholders were able to acquire shares of the company.

Many people sold their shares in the company for a huge profit and many have used part of their profits to purchase additional life insurance policies. Narciso says the hangover from the demutualization campaign contributed directly to the bottom line.

Sun Life Philippines is a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies, under the holding company Sun Life Financial Services of Canada Inc.

Sun Life is even older than the Philippine republic, having been in the country for 105 years. It is ranked as one of the three largest life insurance companies in the Philippines with over 300,000 policyholders nationwide.

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BUSINESS Friday

MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

How to turn website visitors into loyal customers

By Dennis M. Arroyo

Here's a list assembled from some research.

1. Use offline marketing to draw customers to your website.

Peter Horovitz, head of the direct marketing arm Impiric, says "consumers don't distinguish whether they came into contact with a brand on the phone, on the Net or in a store. They only see the brands."

"A brand has many touch points," continues Horovitz. "The sum of these—the brand 'experience'—collectively develops a brand's perception in the consumer's mind."

Use the traditional marketing channels to produce a favorable impression on the brand. That will lead the public to the website for personalized customer service.

2. Treat visitors with a lot of free content.

There are few lures as attractive as getting something for free. That is why content is king in the Net world.

Certain dotcoms prefer to charge a subscription fee for their articles. Those who pay up can partake of the full menu of essays. A better path would be to offer much of it for free. Then ask for payments for services and "premium" content, doing so gradually.

3. Offer personalized products.

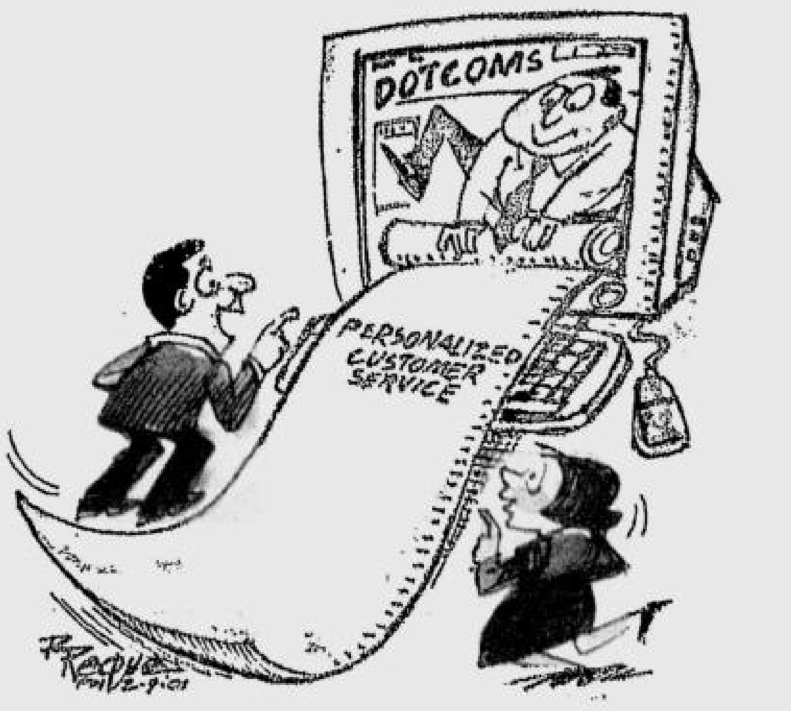
The Net is not really a broadcast medium. It can be better described as a "narrow cast" medium. You use the website to connect to people as individuals, not as a broad mass. That's the Net's great advantage: the potential for fostering long-term relationships.

Technology has advanced the art of data mining, and has made it easy and cheap to tailor messages to each customer's preferences.

An excellent sample of personalization is the Motley Fool financial site. Other websites monitor the movement of the stock market. Motley Fool keeps track of your portfolio—you know the total value of your diverse investments.

4. Make registration very easy.

"A lot of usability studies have found basically one overriding factor about Web users: they are very impatient," says Jakob Nielsen, noted expert on usability. "They just want to get going, get something done, click and get out."



In general, people don't want to spend much time filling out online registration forms. Experience shows that the greater the hassle of registration, the more visitors will turn away. While a long registration form will help them in the long run, visitors don't think that far ahead.

It's better to keep asking questions along the way, getting tidbits of information as the viewer surfs. Something like, "Here's another question."

5. But be careful about privacy concerns.

Don't get too personal with the questions. Asking for the visitor's occupation is fine, while venturing, "Have you suffered from marital separation?" is much too personal.

The winning dotcom must also assure the visitor about the safety of his or her data. The website should state explicitly that such data won't be revealed to others or sold to a third party.

6. Ordering must be hassle-free.

This is what Amazon.com does well, with its one-click feature. For example, the second time a customer orders an item, the site should already know him or her. There is no need to type all that information all over again.

It goes without saying that your Web design must be terrific. Get a cool, simple-to-use default option, to attract the segment that will not customize their sites. Make it easy for them to back track or opt for customization.

"That basically means that every single page has been personalized to know who I am and where to ship the book, if I want it, and to know which credit card to bill," notes Nielsen. "So it's pretty simple. At the same time, it's hugely useful and, of course, it also leads to more sales.

7. Get your customer service staff up to Net speed.

If customers ordered via the Net, they should be able to follow up their order via telephone. Conversely, phone orders should be given code numbers so they can be looked up on the website.

In reality, the two spheres are often disjoint. This is because the standard ordering system still relies on some old technology, so the databases don't get shared. Calls regarding website orders get passed on from sales person to sales person, each unable to answer properly.

8. Use your website to track marketing performance.

Sites are able to measure results, at least those that concern hits, page views, orders. That's in contrast with television: you have to wait for a home survey to get the data on viewership. Kevin Walsh, group media head of NetX Communications, notes that the Web shows how well targets are met.

"As soon as goals are set—for example, registering 1,000 people for online banking—then we as an agency have a target and we can measure, probably better than with any other medium, just how successful the campaign has been," he says. *(Comments to dmarroyo@hotmail.com)*

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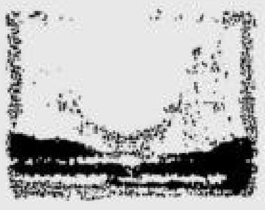

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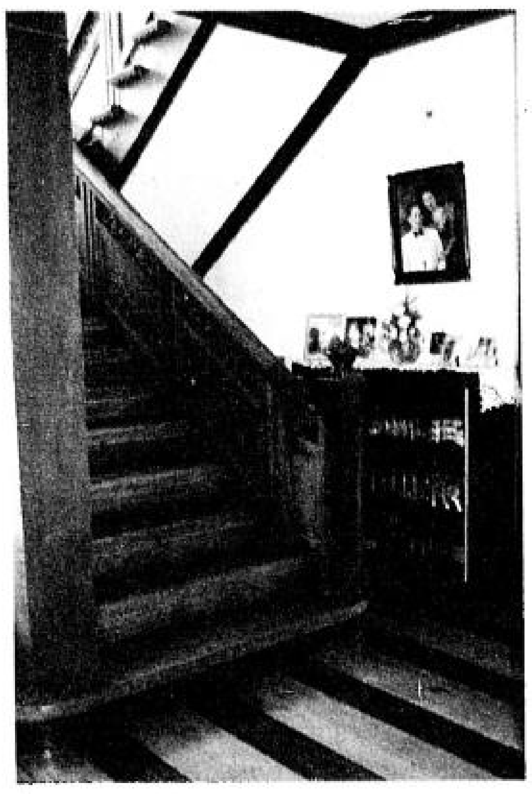
The old glory takes flight



TERMITE-PROOF. The stairs, made of warm *mulawin*, is only one of the several wooden structures in the house spared by termites. San Juan's local craftsmen carved portions of the stairs' handrails.

BY ALEX Y. VERGARA
PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA
PHOTO DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA

THIS weekend home in San Juan, Batangas is decidedly a throwback to a bygone era. With plenty of imagination and hard work, Ching Sales has succeeded in projecting her personality and penchant for the American country look onto an old house built before her time.

Since Ching and husband Boy inherited the vintage 1950s house from his late parents several years ago, there was very little they could do to alter it—or so the wife thought. Ching was soon overwhelmed when she learned the amount of work required to restore the house to its former glory before she could even begin making improvements.

"The walls dividing the house were virtually useless," she recalls. "Even the ceiling, which had become hollow, had to be replaced. Only the floor, doors, stairs and balusters made of *mulawin* were spared by termites."

Ching vouches for the hardy *mulawin*, a termite-resistant wood perfect for a termite-infested town like San Juan. *Narra* cornices that adorn the living and dining room ceiling were also untouched. Of course, the concrete structure, whose facade is inspired by a house in Quezon City, has withstood the test of time and the onslaught of termites.

The original, along E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue, still stands to this day. The house in San Juan also features a small, concrete balcony jutting from the second floor. A pair of flower boxes brimming with native blooms borders a short flight of stairs leading to an outdoor foyer area and the front door.

"This [house] used to be a drab, gray structure sans paint when we first started restoring it," says Ching. "I chose a light yellow paint to brighten up the exterior and make it look more current."

Welcome sight

The double door, framed and made of hard wood and uniform squares of stained glass, is a welcome sight. Several pairs of huge swinging windows also follow the same lines. This time, Boy's parents chose opaque sheets of glass. But they did away with cold, unfriendly metal bars—something they probably would never dare leave out in their house in Metro Manila.

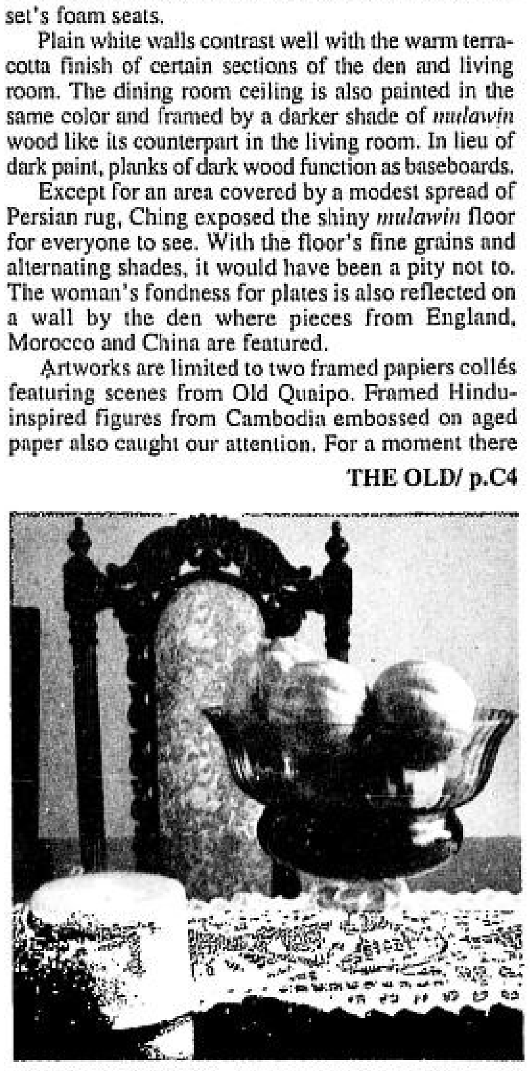
Light blue valance with delicate floral prints crowns each window. The prairie look spills over to the main sofa wrapped in the same material. Ching has resorted to the same formula by combining off-white and faded indigo materials in the den. Several pieces of matching indigo valance also drape each window. The same color scheme covers the wicker set's foam seats.

Plain white walls contrast well with the warm terra-cotta finish of certain sections of the den and living room. The dining room ceiling is also painted in the same color and framed by a darker shade of *mulawin* wood like its counterpart in the living room. In lieu of dark paint, planks of dark wood function as baseboards.

Except for an area covered by a modest spread of Persian rug, Ching exposed the shiny *mulawin* floor for everyone to see. With the floor's fine grains and alternating shades, it would have been a pity not to. The woman's fondness for plates is also reflected on a wall by the den where pieces from England, Morocco and China are featured.

Artworks are limited to two framed papiers collés featuring scenes from Old Quaipo. Framed Hindu-inspired figures from Cambodia embossed on aged paper also caught our attention. For a moment there

THE OLD/ p.C4



FRUIT IN SEASON. A large candle and fruit bowl brimming with *suha* add a dash of elegance to the dark *narra* table. Local craftsmen also did the dining set almost 50 years ago. Note the intricate carvings edging the chair's backrest.

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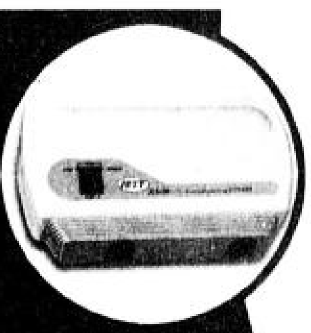

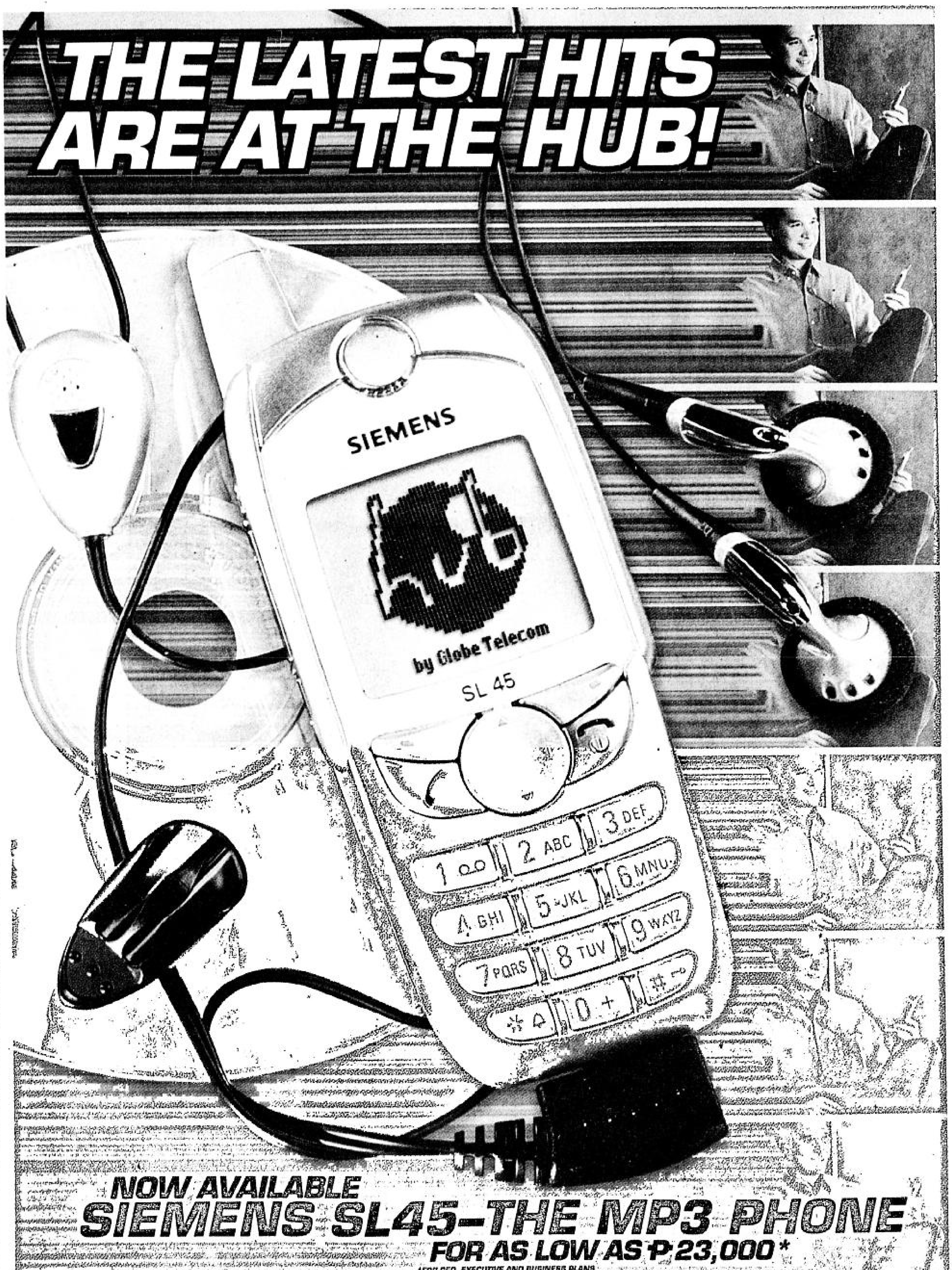

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An old-fashioned garden in San Juan, Batangas

The plants are there, singing praises to the house. A veritable Eden, it even has a snake

CATTAILS shrub by the gate

PITCHER plant from the forest

BY TITA V. GIRON
PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA
PICTORIAL DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA

NATIVE giant ferns, a common fixture of old gardens in Southern Luzon, stand tall and proud in front of the Sales house in San Juan, Batangas. We are told that the ferns are as old as time, older even than the vanishing native *as-is* tree and the *mulawin* hardwood that used to grow wild in this sleepy town.

Cool and graceful, the giant ferns guard the main entrance of the well-preserved house. It was actually built in the 1950s using antique *mulawin* beams and pieces from the ancient building that stood in the property. Like most residential houses of the period, the Sales home has a typical garden where old favorite plants sing praises to the design of the house.

Heavenly porch

A well-seasoned jasmine vine, for example, clambers up the front wall of the house and reaches up to the little porch that overlooks the street. Someone reminisces that when the vine is in bloom, it smells heavenly around the porch, and houseguests pluck the white flowers to wear on their hair. We imagine perfumed houseguests watching the fiesta procession from that front porch.

On fiesta days, Ching Sales discloses, the residents join the beautification competition by designing their gardens. Being one of the organizers, she sets a good example by setting up a festive mini carousel in front of the house. She also lights the *capiz* box lanterns on the branches of the Golden Shower tree in the garden.

All over the compact garden of Ching are old-fashioned plants. There's a cattails shrub, or the old Chenille plant, close to the gate. Forget-me-not hedges stand out with their unusual bright blue flowers. And there are white lilies.

On one side of the house is a vigorous yesterday-today-tomorrow vine (*Quisqualis* species) which has scaled the wall and is about to reach the roof. It takes its popular name from the way the scented flowers change color from white to light pink and red. But old folks call it the *niog-niogan* vine. It's a good purgative for troubled stomach, they add.

Eden and snake

Close to the vine is a wild plant with red berries. Ching cannot remember where it came from. It is obvious, however, that it grew naturally from the droppings of birds and bats that abound in this virtual Eden.

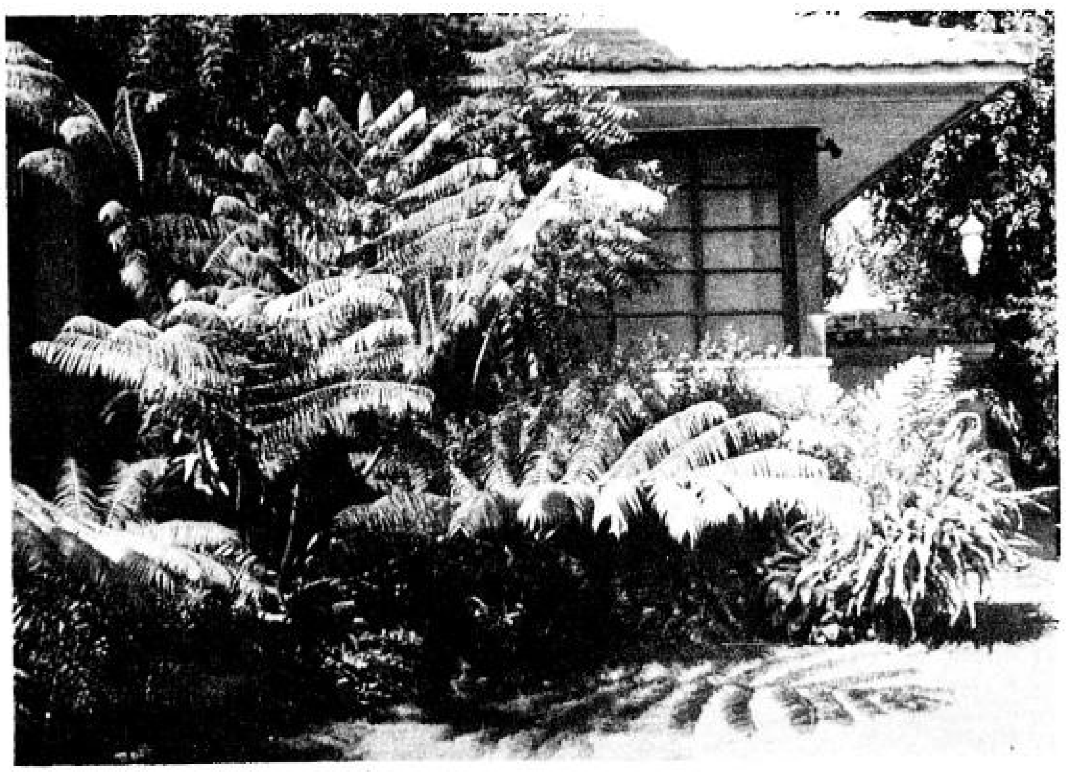
And speaking of Eden, Ching's garden is not without the proverbial snake. Disturbed out of its lair, the garden snake slithered to safety right in front of its shocked audience. We have obviously disturbed it in the excitement of arranging and rearranging native pitcher plants for the photo session at the veranda.

Ching's house and garden are not exclusive sanctuary for the wild snakes, bats and birds that come and go. It is also sanctuary for the Sales family who live in Manila. When the going gets tough and the city noise and pollution become intolerable, they hie to their sanctuary in the sleepy town of San Juan, Batangas.

WILD plant with red berries

CLIMBING jasmine vine towers over giant fern

YESTERDAY-TODAY-TOMORROW vine



NATIVE giant fern and jasmine vine

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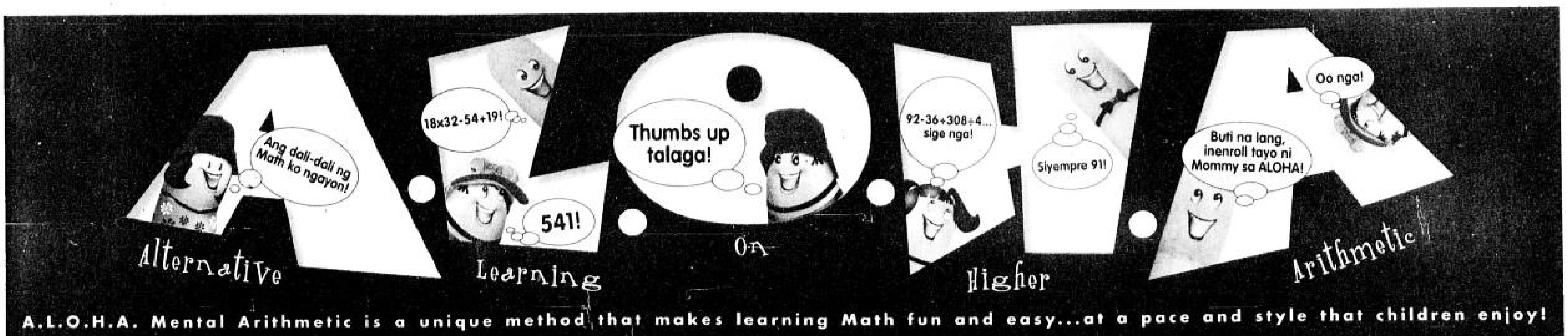
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How green is the furniture industry

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

FURNITURE is one of the Philippines' top exports. The industry is represented by creative, quality-conscious people—manufacturers, designers and craftsmen—who have proven time and again that they have what it takes to make it to global competitiveness.

Profit reports and comparisons with Asian competitors show the Philippine edge, which is why the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP), and its support organization, the Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation Inc. (CFIF), put up an annual trade show, the Philippine International Furniture Show. This year, the show's theme is "Contrast & Contradictions" precisely to underscore the beauty and innovativeness that distinguish and identify made-in-the-Philippines furniture.

The CFIP is composed of 1,500 member companies in 11 regional chapters nationwide. It employs 60,000 people directly and 350,000 others indirectly. In 1999, furniture exports came up to $352.95 million, with wood and rattan as the major raw materials.

This brings us to the main concern of the industry today: its natural resources and the environment.

It is generally conceded that Filipino furniture manufacturers are great in the way they combine different materials for a piece of furniture. They can put together contrasting material like light rattan and hard solid wood with amazing results. But they know they will be able to do this only as long as those raw materials are available.

That's why furniture makers have to be environmentalists first. Since wood, rattan, bamboo are the main raw materials they work with, they understand that cutting trees has to be systematic and well-programmed, never undertaken carelessly. Material-gathering must be done in a non-destructive manner to counter the state of our forests that are dwindling in the face of illegal, irresponsible logging. Denuded forests mean less raw materials.

This is why, says Jose L. Caparas, CFIP president, the Chamber supports the industrial tree plantation idea which assures a continuous supply of specific woods through a system that allows young trees to grow while older ones are set for cutting.

The CFIP is always on the lookout for trees that lend themselves well for industrial plantations, such as the *gmelina*. The CFIP is now working with the Department of Science and Technology on the utilization of those trees for furniture manufacture, and on scientific ways to cut and kiln-dry them for better marketability here and abroad.

Besides keeping abreast of better technical know-how, members support—and participate—in tree planting projects of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, especially for particular species.

To further show they mean business about caring for the environment, the CFIP, in September 2000, signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the DENR for the following purposes: to promote efficiency in the management of natural resources (for conservation, protection and sustainable development); to accelerate the development of forest plantations to assure consumers of a continuous supply of wood products; and to help maintain ecological balance throughout the country.

Other objectives stress the enhancement of the productivity of forest-based furniture industries, and the improvement of the social, economic and environmental conditions of people living in forests. It is everyone's expectation that through this means, illegal activities in the forest will be curtailed.

The MOA also obliges both parties to mutually assist each other in disseminating information, monitoring and evaluating CFIP members in their environmental compliance requirements, their licenses and permits.

Ultimately, the agreement will redound to the good of our forests, our wood products industries, and our economy. The thing to watch out for now, says Caparas, is illegal logging which favors only a few, and cares nothing for the upkeep of our forests, or the national economy. Meanwhile, the CFIP is doing its part.

The flower beneath the ocean floor

From forests, we go to ocean floors. At about the time the CFIP and the DENR were getting set to sign the MOA on the conservation, protection and sustainable development of the environment, psychic researcher Jaime T. Licauco was receiving this message through a trance channel. He sent me copy of the message after mulling over what he was to do about it. "You probably will understand it better than I," he said. The message was clear enough, one we've heard many times before. We hear it in warnings to reckless fishermen who think nothing about using dynamite and poison to make their catch, even if it means the destruction of their source of livelihood. It is not small fish alone that suffer from senseless fishing. The big aquatic mammals fall prey to unscrupulous hunters, too.

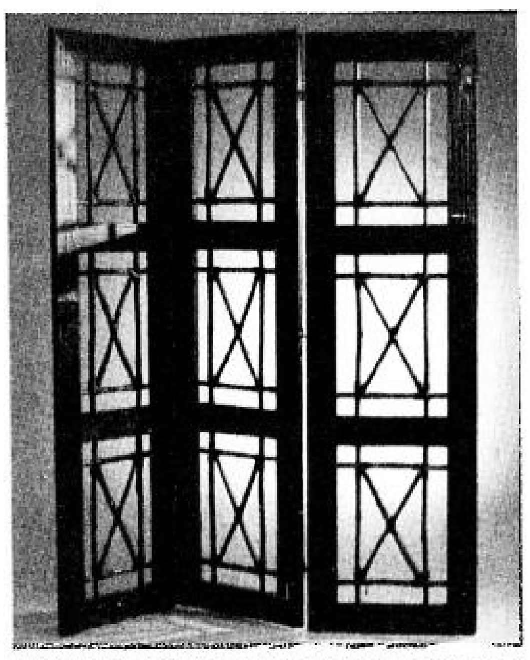
We quote here the entire message as received by Licauco:

"Many eons ago, a beautiful unique flower lived near the sea, amid the sea urchins and sea grass.

"No storm could touch it, no typhoon could bend it, no tidal wave could destroy it.

"There it lay on the ocean floor beneath the sea, it seemed to live on and on, until man came along and destroyed the corals that protect the sea and its creatures. That was when the unique flower began to wither and die.

"The same fate befalls the hapless earth above it if man does not heed the message of the flower. The flower is now gone, but its message lives on forever."



A THREE-PIECE screen divider made from crushed bamboo, bamboo twigs and leather by Designs Ligna. The manufacturer is part of CFIP.

The Lumad situation, according to PNOC

WE beg to disagree with some of the points that Ms Doris Gaskell Nuyda raised in her Jan. 26 column regarding the PNOC geothermal plant and the Lumads of Mt. Apo.

It has always been the policy of the Philippine National Oil Company-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) to assume a wholistic approach to development when it undertakes any of its projects. This means we at PNOC make sure that all development fronts—economic, social and cultural—are given serious consideration.

In the case of the Mt. Apo geothermal project, we were particularly careful about the development process because of its unique situation: Mt. Apo being a national park and home to many indigenous communities. The project, in fact, underwent a two-year review process, the longest and most rigid in Philippine history, before it was granted an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

The ECC listed 27 stringent conditions, which we continue to follow to this day. Among these conditions were the creation of an Environmental and Tribal Welfare Trust Fund (ETWTF) and the holding of the "Pamaas," a traditional tribal ritual, to obtain the blessings of the gods for the project. These requirements were to ensure the welfare of the indigenous people of Mt. Apo through culturally acceptable and sustainable initiatives.

In March 1992, 800 members of various indigenous communities of Mt. Apo and 20 of their *datus* performed the "Pamaas." Both PNOC and Napocor officials were invited to take part in this sacred ritual and were later even bestowed honorary titles. This was clearly an indication of the acceptance of the project by the tribal communities.

Consequently, we consulted with the indigenous people and sought the help of social scientists from Ateneo de Davao University to help us design our community relations program. Part of the study was, in fact, how to revive and promote indigenous culture, arts and craft.

On top of our community relations, the Mt. Apo Foundation Inc., which handles the ETWTF, has to this day dispersed more than P8 million for various environmental and sociocultural projects for the communities within a 10-km radius from the geothermal project.

The project has been in operation for four years now and because of the participatory process and initiatives that the company undertook with the local communities, the Mt. Apo geothermal project has earned recognition for being a model of sustainable development.

While we do not deny that there is still a small group opposing the project, we are encouraged by the strong and growing support of the local residents and tribal communities in North Cotabato where our project is situated. More important, we are gratified by the empowerment of the indigenous people of Mt. Apo.

We therefore believe that these facts are contrary to the reports that have reached Ms Nuyda that the Lumads "have all but forgotten their culture..." and that "the people's self-esteem had sunk so low that they thought they were unworthy of support..."

As we pursue our larger mandate of serving the country's energy needs, rest assured that we will always have the best interest of our Mindanao brothers and sisters at heart, as we also do for our brothers in Leyte, Negros and Bicol where we also have other geothermal projects.

(Sgd.) ARTURO M. MORE
public relations manager
PNOC Energy Development Corp.

Fashion sale

A MEMBER of the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines (FDAP) and the Fashion Design Council of the Philippines (FDCP), Bong Garcia is one of the youngest names in the local RTW scene today.

The designer behind the labels Manuelle by BG and Alicia by BG, Bong is known for his casual and corporate wear.

Bong's clothes are available in not one, not two, but nine outlets all over the country. He has branches at Robinsons Galleria and Ermita, Tutuban Center, Cainta, Bacolod City, Landmark in Makati, Cebu Country Mall, Gaisano City Mall in Cagayan de Oro, KCC in Marbel and General Santos City.

Bong, who says he got into designing for reasons of "self-fulfillment," broke into RTW in December 1993 when he sold his first collection to Robinsons Galleria. Since then, he has developed a loyal following among students who want clothes that are casual yet stylish, and career women who want to look professional and polished, yet comfortable. Bong has successfully blended all these different elements together to come up with clothes that he described as being "fashionable, yet of good quality."

This young designer is also slowly building a name for himself in the international scene. Bong has distinguished himself in fashion design competitions abroad such as in Paris and Hong Kong. Despite his success, however, Bong remains a humble person with a sidle lifestyle.

To celebrate his success in the RTW market as well as abroad, Bong announces the holding of an inventory sale at all his outlets on Feb. 14-20. He is offering 10-percent, 25-percent and 50-percent off on selected items as his way of sharing his blessings with his loyal customers.

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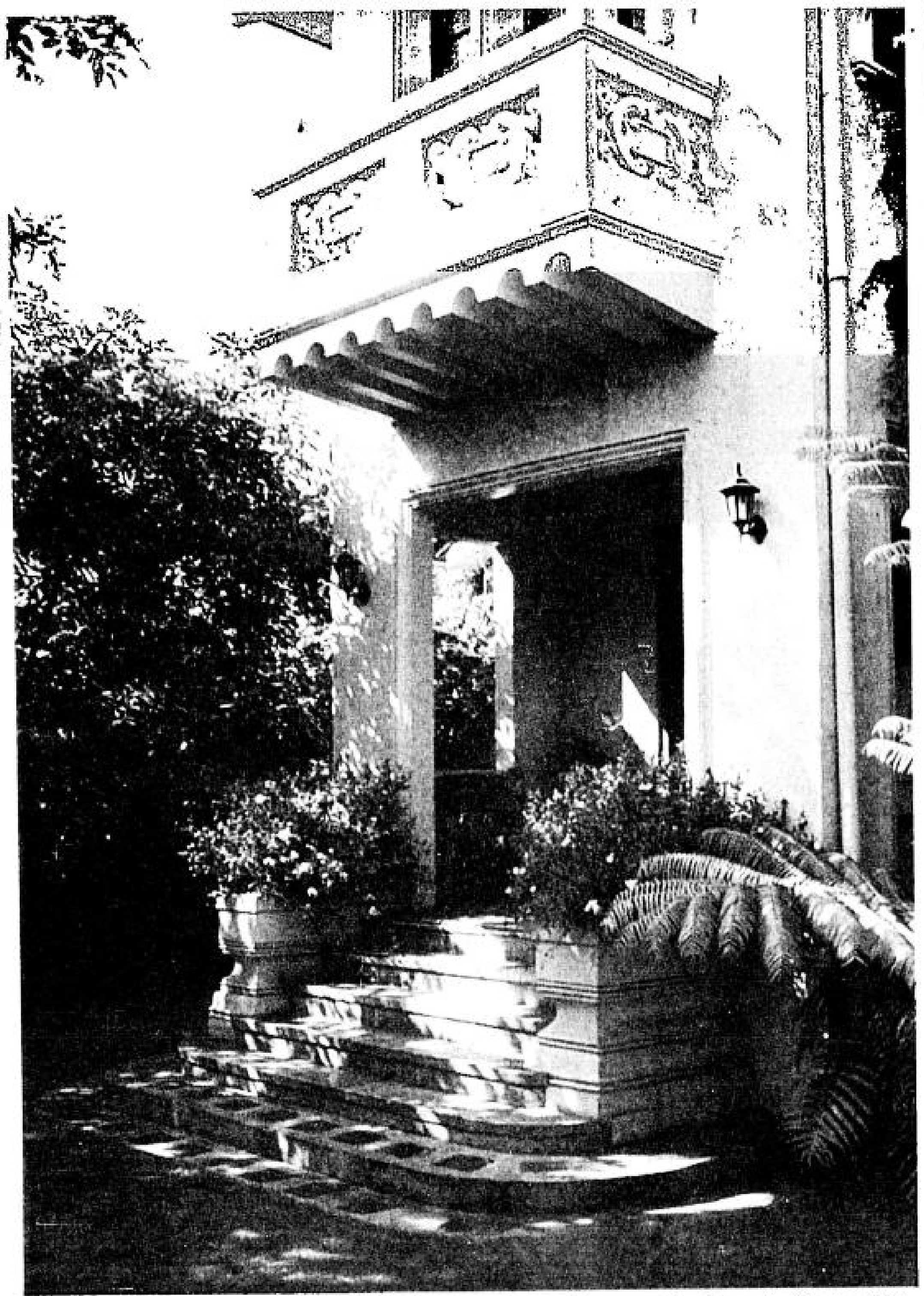
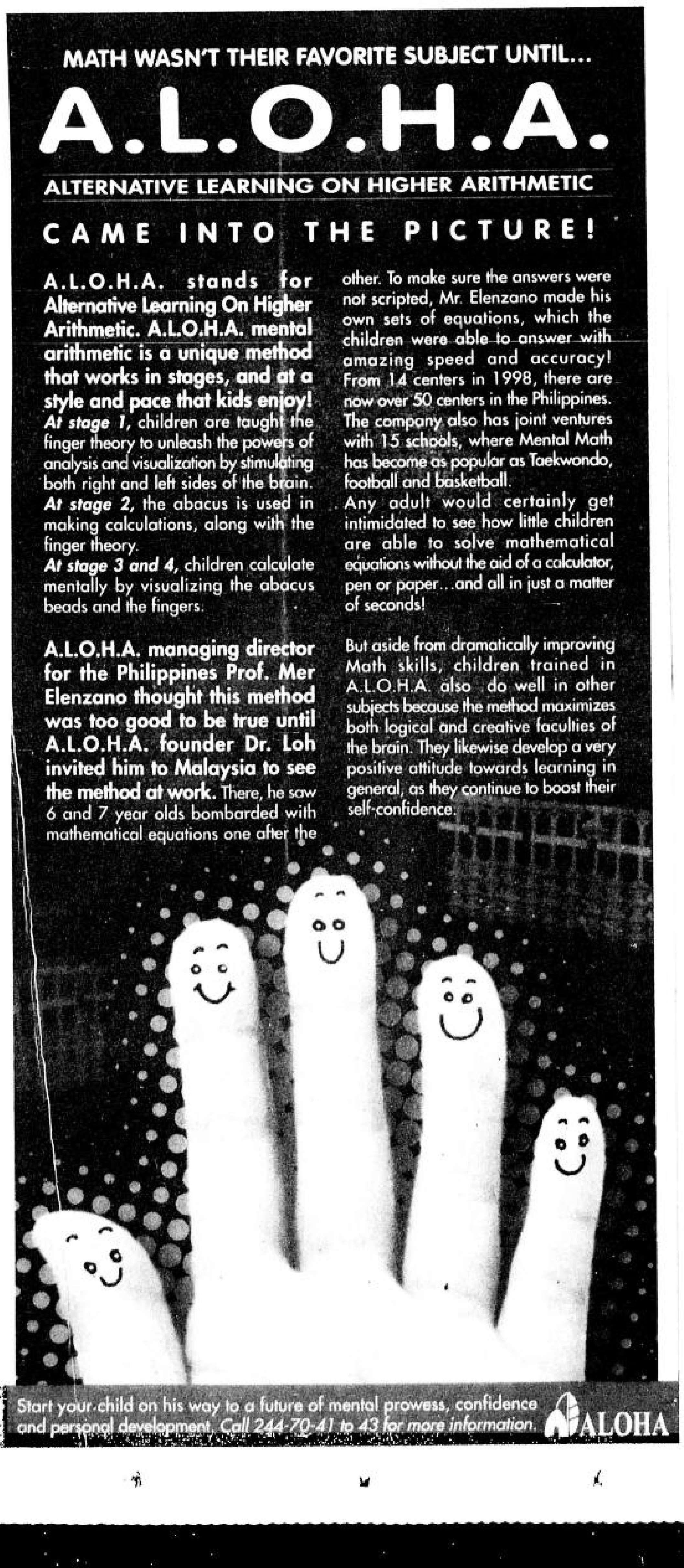


SOMETHING BORROWED. The house's facade is inspired by an existing house in Quezon City. Ching Sales chose light yellow paint to make the house look more current and inviting.



MATH WASN'T THEIR FAVORITE SUBJECT UNTIL...

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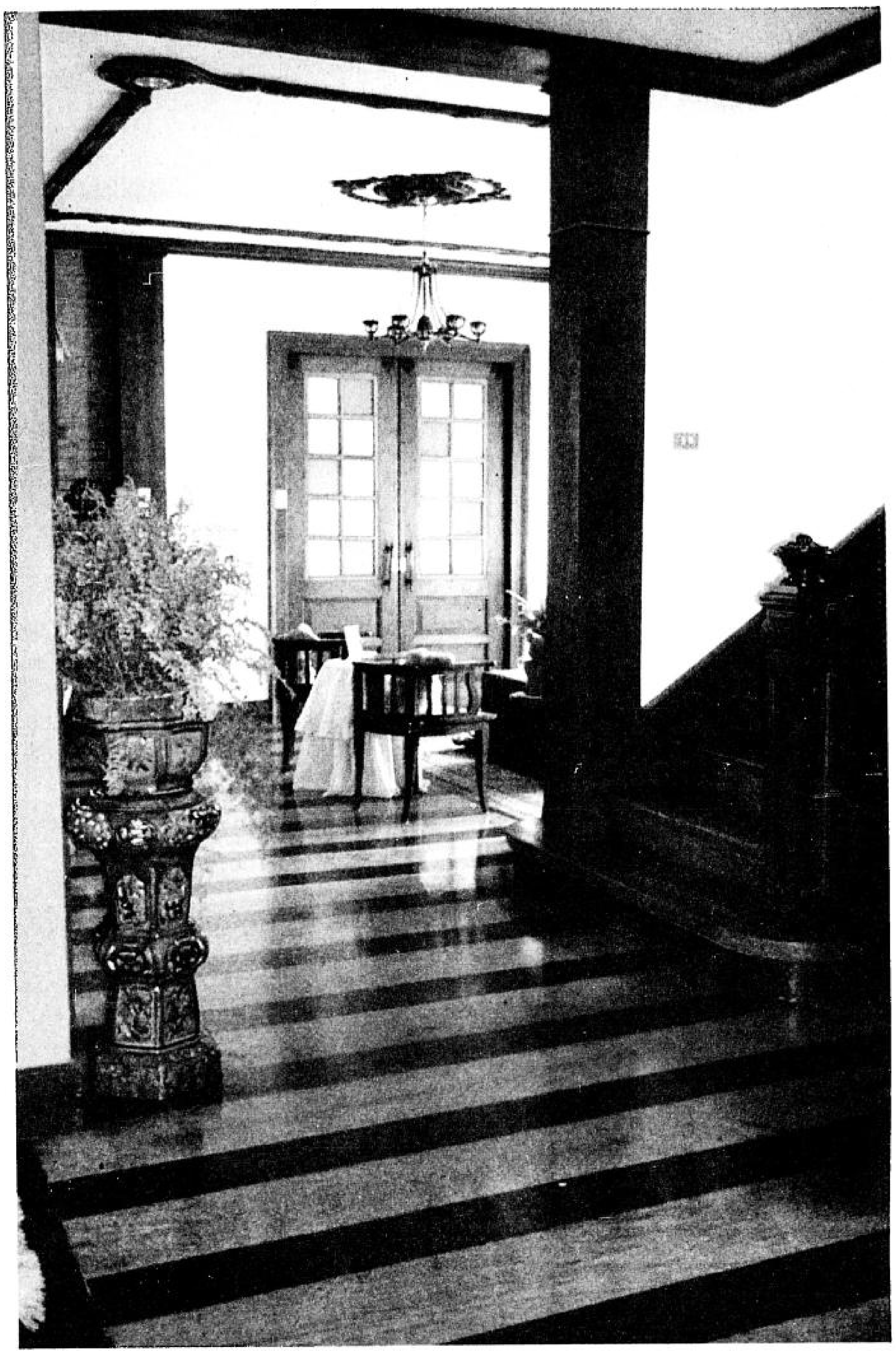
At stage 2, the abacus is used in making calculations, along with the finger theory.
At stage 3 and 4, children calculate mentally by visualizing the abacus beads and the fingers.

A.L.O.H.A. managing director for the Philippines Prof. Mer Elenzano thought this method was too good to be true until A.L.O.H.A. founder Dr. Loh invited him to Malaysia to see the method at work. There, he saw 6 and 7 year olds bombarded with mathematical equations one after the other. To make sure the answers were not scripted, Mr. Elenzano made his own sets of equations, which the children were able to answer with amazing speed and accuracy! From 14 centers in 1998, there are now over 50 centers in the Philippines. The company also has joint ventures with 15 schools, where Mental Math has become as popular as Taekwondo, football and basketball.
Any adult would certainly get intimidated to see how little children are able to solve mathematical equations without the aid of a calculator, pen or paper...and all in just a matter of seconds!

But aside from dramatically improving Math skills, children trained in A.L.O.H.A. also do well in other subjects because the method maximizes both logical and creative faculties of the brain. They likewise develop a very positive attitude towards learning in general, as they continue to boost their self-confidence.

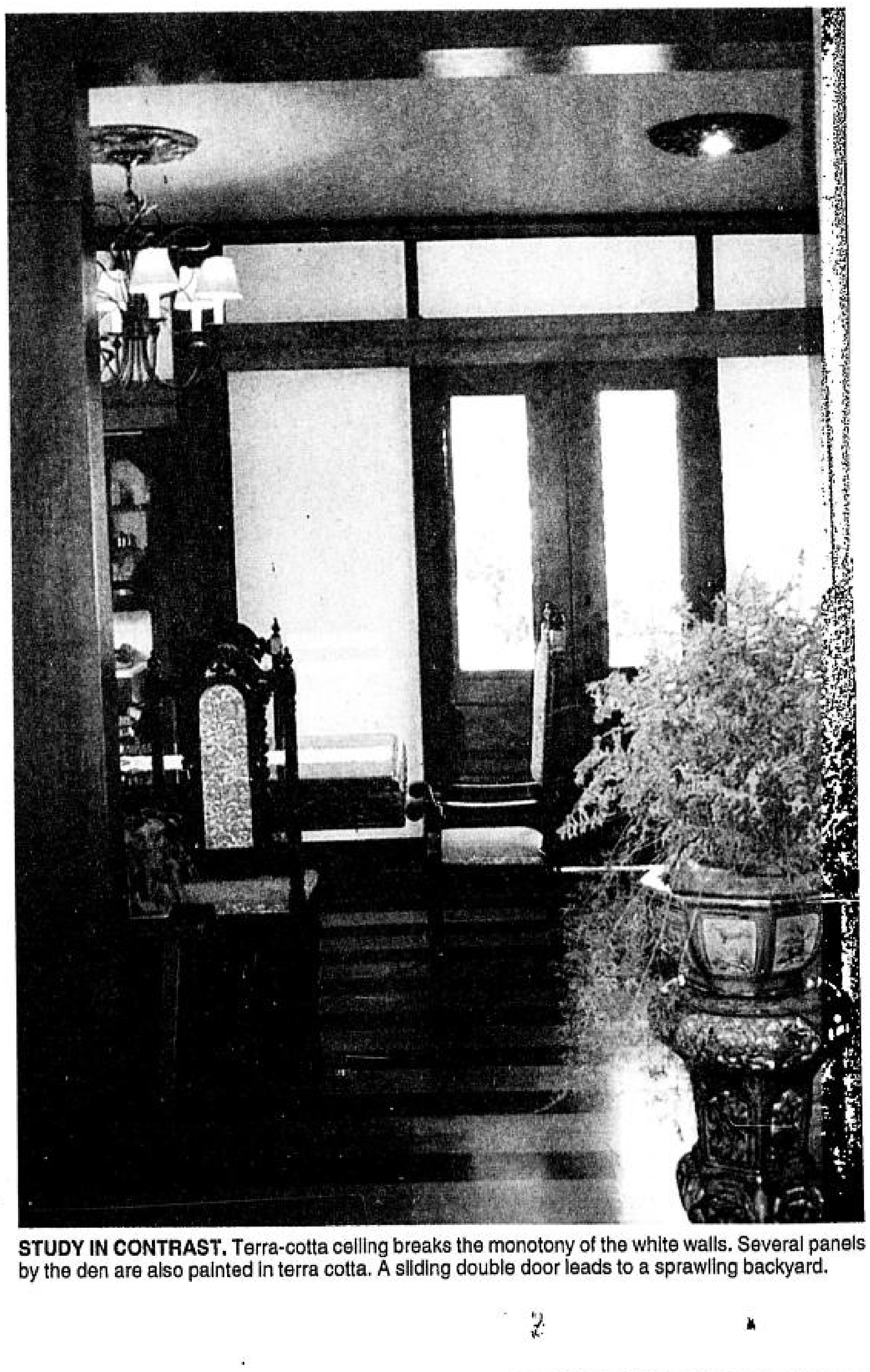
Start your child on his way to a future of mental prowess, confidence and personal development. Call 244-70-41 to 43 for more information. ALOHA



FLOORED. The striped *mulawin* floor gleams in the afternoon sun. Note the framed double doors and intricate cornices that also stood the test of time.

The old glory takes flight

Ching and Boy Sales restore the 1950s house they inherited in San Juan, Batangas by largely enhancing its durable 'narra' and 'mulawin' woodwork



STUDY IN CONTRAST. Terra-cotta ceiling breaks the monotony of the white walls. Several panels by the den are also painted in terra cotta. A sliding double door leads to a sprawling backyard.

PRAIRIE SCENE. Ching's penchant for the American country look is seen in light blue valances—the same cloth used to cover the sofa. Swinging windows sans bars reflect the town's level of peace and order.

(From page C1)

we thought the piece was made of wood, but its fraying edges soon gave it away.

Pest control

Ching, by the way, had the new walls and ceiling treated for termites. She sought the services of a pest-control company called Timberpro (tel. 541-3282), which is responsible for installing 30 "Sentricon" stations spread 8 to 10 ft apart from each other outside the house.

Each station or cylinder is buried 10 inches into the ground. Unlike conventional systems, each station doesn't poison termites directly. Instead, it slowly kills them by preventing them from shedding off their skin. The pests are drawn to the stations, where they feed on a combination of chemicals, even before they can crawl to the house. The new system, though, requires regular monitoring.

"I haven't had any problems with termites so far," says Ching.

Ching, whose family comes from nearby Quezon, speaks highly of San Juan's fine craftsmen who are responsible for several indoor carvings found in the house, from cornices to posts and handrails that make up the fabulous stairs. To think they have not undergone any formal training.

The one piece she's proudest of—a 12-seat dining table made of dark *narra* and set off by carved edges—has not left the dining room since it was made there by several farmhands almost 50 years ago. Ching later commissioned another group to do a lowly *bangko*, this time made of *mulawin*.

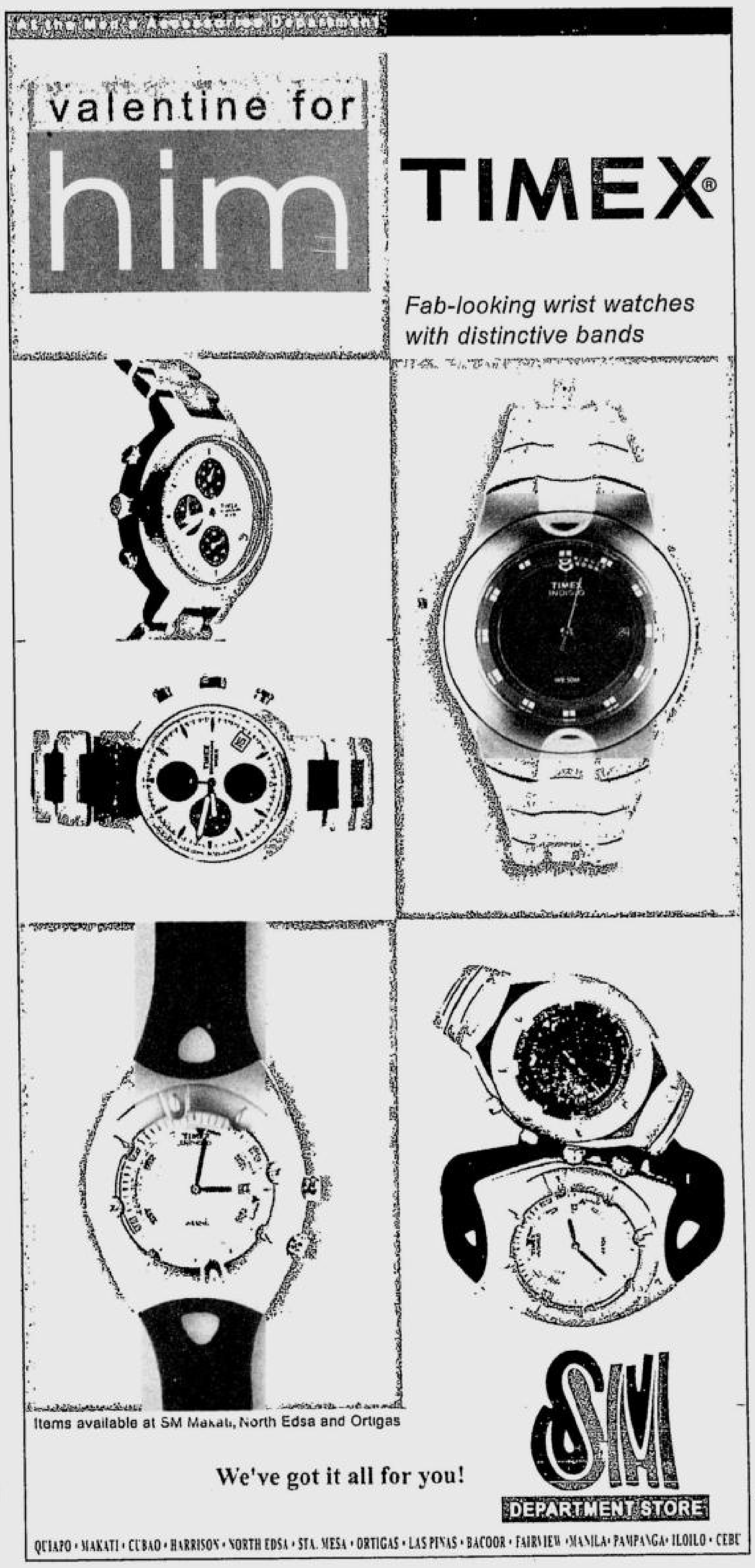
"This table is so huge, it will never fit through the door," she explains, as she points the carved creation. "They had to make it right here in the dining room."

Maintaining a house and sprawling garden hundreds of miles away from their city home is no joke. Due to their busy schedules, the couple is unable to drive to the province as often as they want to. A caretaker cleans the house every other week, while a gardener regularly tends the plants and takes care of Boy's prized roosters.

But once they do find the time, Ching and Boy make the most of their weekend basking in their San Juan home's soothing atmosphere and country charm. And the madness of Metro Manila seems a million light years away.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer. com.ph

PERMANENT FIXTURE. The huge table, which seats 12, has never left the dining room where it was made. An unpretentious *bangko* is placed behind the carved chairs.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SuperStar Virgo is the newest and largest mega-ship in the Asia-Pacific region. The pride and joy of Star Cruises, it can accommodate up to 2,000 passengers, and has a variety of facilities for non-stop entertainment, dining, sports and business activities. The luxury liner features 16 restaurants and food outlets, gym and spa, swimming pools, fun and game arcades, discos, state-of-the art cinema, auditorium, library and a modern business center.

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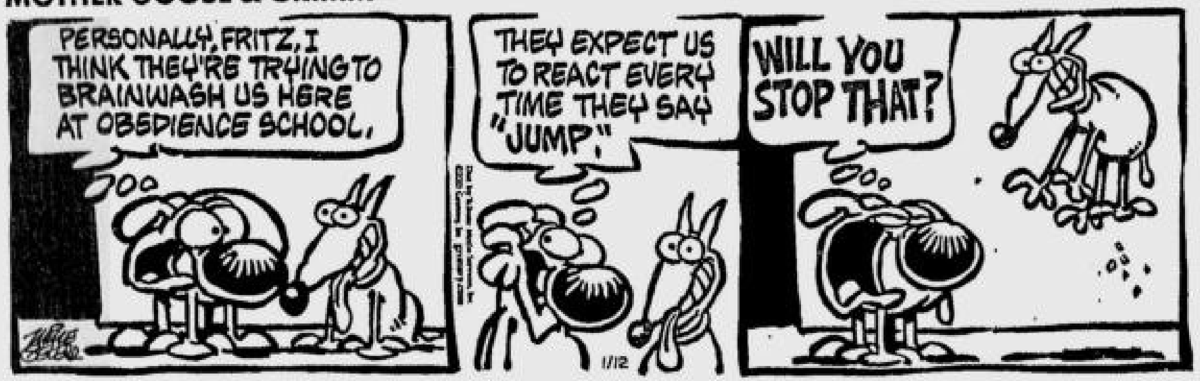
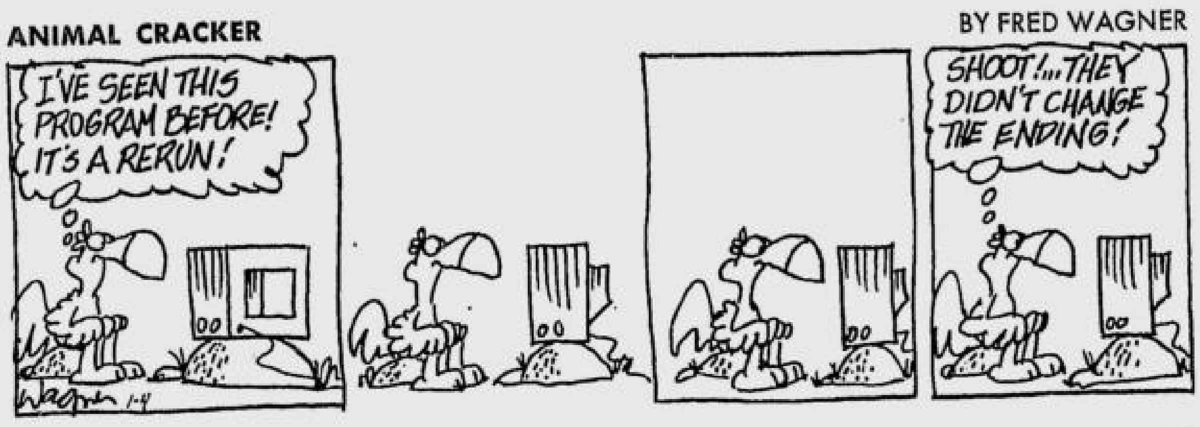
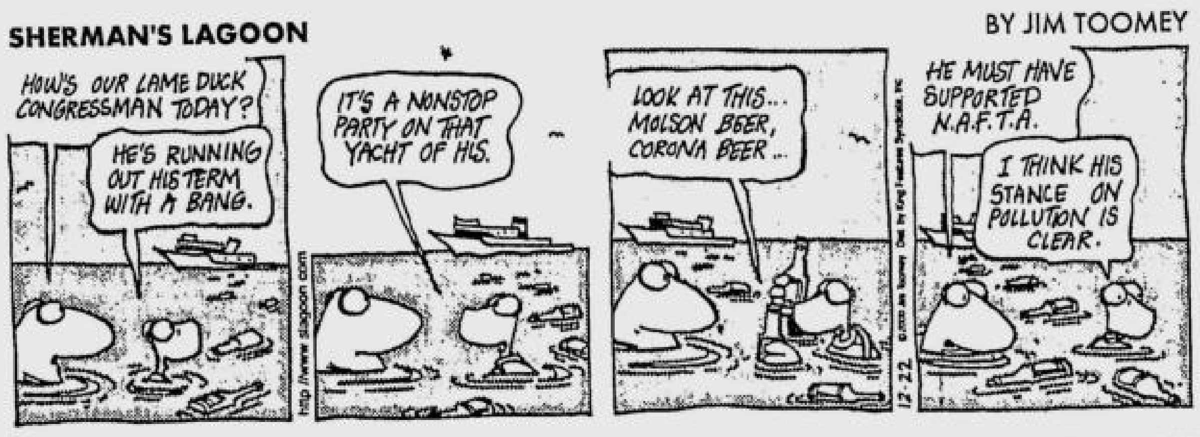
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM
BY MIKE PETERS


PERSONALLY, FRITZ, I THINK THEY'RE TRYING TO BRAINWASH US HERE AT OBEDIENCE SCHOOL.
THEY EXPECT US TO REACT EVERY TIME THEY SAY "JUMP."
WILL YOU STOP THAT?
1/12

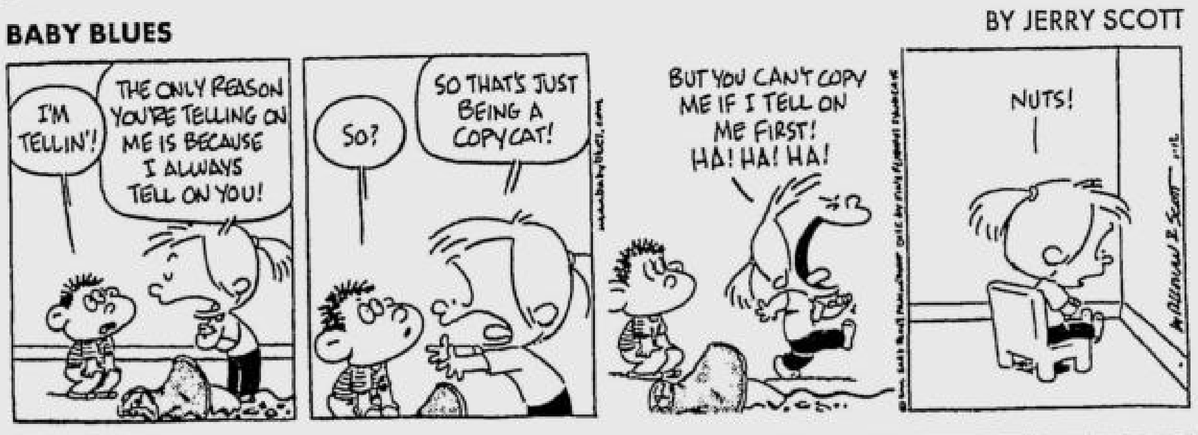
ANIMAL CRACKER
BY FRED WAGNER


I'VE SEEN THIS PROGRAM BEFORE! IT'S A RERUN!
SHOOT!... THEY DIDN'T CHANGE THE ENDING!
Wagner 1-4

SHERMAN'S LAGOON
BY JIM TOOMEY


HOW'S OUR LAME DUCK CONGRESSMAN TODAY?
HE'S RUNNING OUT HIS TERM WITH A BANG.
IT'S A NONSTOP PARTY ON THAT YACHT OF HIS.
LOOK AT THIS... MOLSON BEER, CORONA BEER...
HE MUST HAVE SUPPORTED N.A.F.T.A.
I THINK HIS STANCE ON POLLUTION IS CLEAR.
12-22

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M TELLIN'!
THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE TELLING ON ME IS BECAUSE I ALWAYS TELL ON YOU!
SO?
SO THAT'S JUST BEING A COPYCAT!
BUT YOU CAN'T COPY ME IF I TELL ON ME FIRST! HA! HA! HA!
NUTS!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mia Farrow, Carole King, Judith Light, Charles Shaughnessy, Alice Walker, Joe Pesci

Happy Birthday: "Easy come, easy go" best describes the kind of year you are going to have. If you jump at every opportunity, you can expect some terrific gains this year. Be prepared to implement your creative ideas. The more input you have into any project that interests you, the better you will do. You have lots to offer and mustn't sell yourself short. Involvement will lead to success. Your numbers: 19, 25, 31, 37, 40, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your emotional life is still suffering. You must take a long, hard look at yourself and your motives. Get busy making changes if you want to rekindle the family ties you have demolished.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Problems with those you live with will be unnerving. Your energy will be down, and it will be important that you get enough rest. Don't make promises you can't keep.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Love will flourish if you get out with friends. You will be in gear to relate to potential partners with forceful charm. A moneymaking venture will be successful.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You should be concerned about your financial situation. Tie up your money in safe long-term investments. Don't let anyone try to convince you to spend your money foolishly.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You will be dramatic today. Try to keep a lid on it if you don't want to embarrass yourself. False assertions will not go over well with loved ones. You'll be lonely if your family gets fed up with you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Catch up on overdue work. You need to live up to your promises. Additional responsibilities may be dropped in your lap. Don't take them on unless absolutely necessary.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You can begin the process of quitting a bad habit today. Have a game plan ready and use positive thought projection to achieve your goals.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Work hard at improving your life. Look into ways to make more money, expand your skills, and be a more knowledgeable person. You set your own standards and stick to them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will be led into unusual topics of conversation. Don't show your rigidity by being judgmental. You need to listen and experiment if you wish to expand your awareness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Moneymaking opportunities may not be all that they're cracked up to be. Check the fine points before you decide to get involved. Financial limitations you can do without.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Make special arrangements for you and your lover. You need to spend some time alone. Put your heart and soul on the table and let your mate know how you feel.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Stick to your work and avoid being dragged into conversations that could lead to trouble. If you don't have something nice to say, avoid saying anything. You need to concentrate on making friends, not losing them.

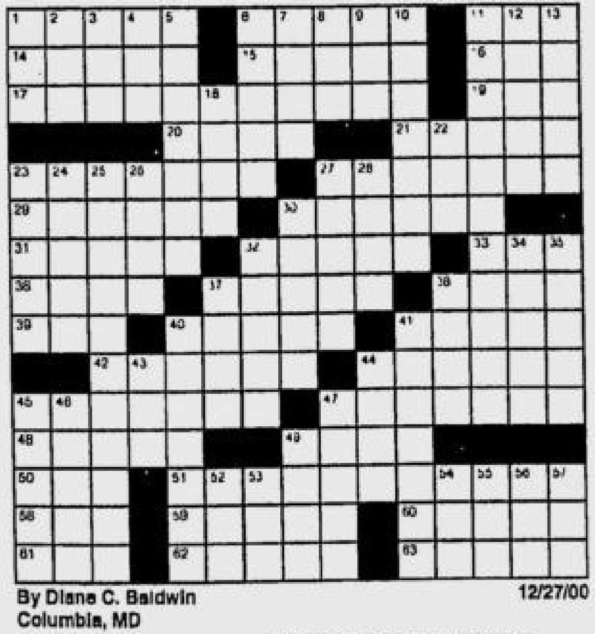
Birthday Baby: You are emotional and sensitive, and will always stick up for the underdog. You have great compassion and desire to lend a helping hand. You are astute and will always notice the fine but important details.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS
1 News bits
6 "Witness" sect
11 Scrooge word
14 Heavenly bangs
15 World according to Pierre
16 Broadcast letters of old
17 Brain food?
19 Auction ending
20 Hired muscle
21 Stockpile
23 Fighter
27 Wait in the wings
29 Worshiper
30 Watchdog alert?
31 Mann or Kinski
32 Old-fashioned sound systems
33 Age proofs, for short
36 Alleviate
37 Boxer Roberto
38 Cinch
39 Command to Fido
40 Soft powders
41 Language group of Zulu and Swahili
42 Dough
44 Liquefied
45 Makeshift conveyance
47 Gila monsters
48 __ metabolism
49 Singer Joan
50 Frequently in a poem
51 Yegg
58 Once named
59 Practical
60 Horned beast, for short
61 Mess up
62 Flakes off
63 Scatterbrained

DOWN
1 Election winners
2 Male turkey
3 __ Marie Saint
4 Besmirch
5 Comes to rest
6 French love
7 Synthesizer maker
8 Pen fill
9 R. Reagan's Star Wars
10 Mulish talk
11 Family provider
12 Sour-tasting, old-style
13 Robust
18 "Mask" star
22 Lennon's love
23 Cooks with dry heat
24 '50s candidate Stevenson
25 Roast host
26 Loyal
27 Lounge furniture
28 Castor to Pollux
30 Tree with papery bark
32 Luau dances
34 Old-fashioned
35 Taters
37 Painter Salvador
38 Poet Teasdale
40 Readies for production
41 Scavenger bird
43 Latin eggs
44 Docking site
45 Beef entree
46 Decathlete Johnson
47 Oxford ties
49 Ringer
52 Gobbled up
53 Rebuke of disgust
54 Greek X
55 Caboodle's partner?
56 Annapolis grad
57 Trigger rider



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

12/27/00

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	L	A	P	■	T	A	F	T	■	A	S	S	A	I
T	O	R	I	■	A	L	O	E	■	E	L	A	N	D
R	U	I	N	■	I	S	L	E	■	N	O	L	T	E
A	P	S	E	■	P	O	I	N	S	E	T	T	I	A
P	E	E	W	E	E	■	O	S	H	A	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	R	O	I	L	■	■	A	S	H	O	R	E
S	T	E	E	N	■	U	T	A	H	■	O	L	A	V
C	O	D	A	S	■	T	A	U	■	A	L	I	N	E
O	B	I	T	■	K	E	R	R	■	C	L	O	D	S
P	Y	T	H	O	N	■	■	A	S	H	Y	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	N	E	E	D	■	K	E	B	A	B	S
S	P	R	U	C	E	T	R	E	E	■	O	N	A	N
O	H	A	R	A	■	H	A	R	T	■	U	N	T	O
L	E	G	A	L	■	E	P	I	C	■	G	O	E	R
D	W	E	L	L	■	L	E	C	H	■	H	Y	D	E

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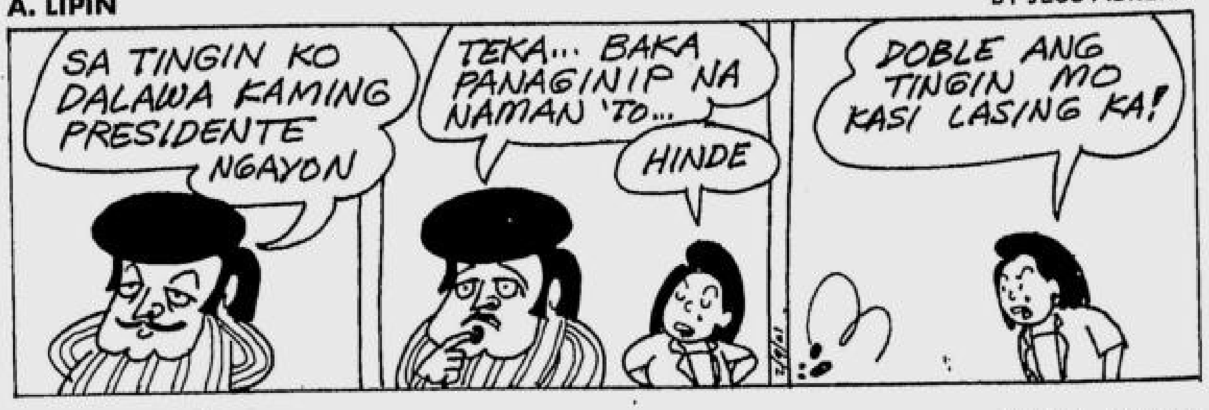
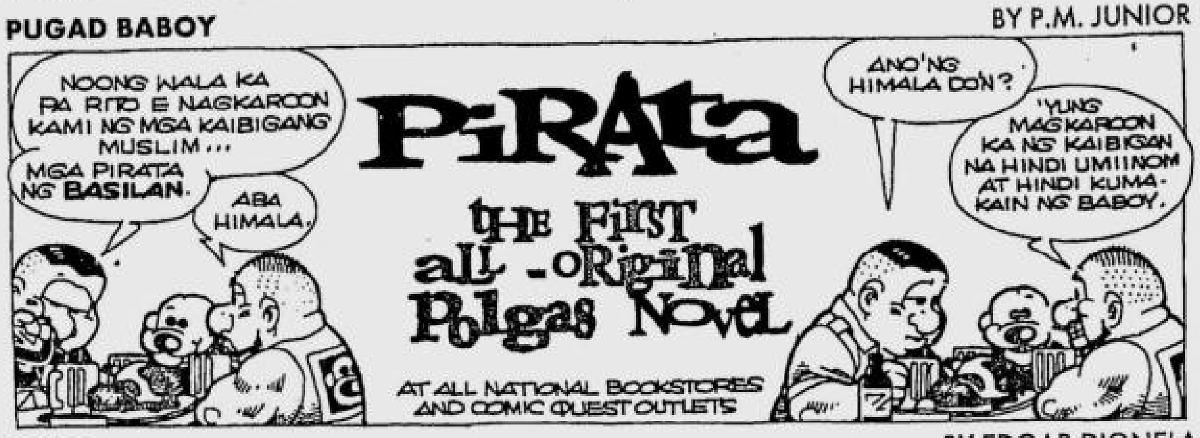
12/27/00

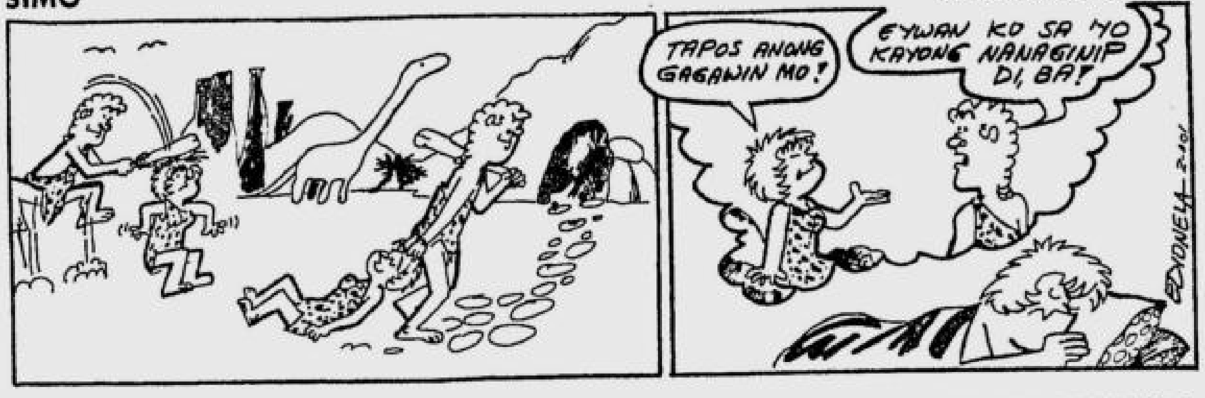
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


SA TINGIN KO DALAWA KAMING PRESIDENTE NGAYON
TEKA... BAKA PANAGINIP NA NAMAN 'TO...
HINDE
DOBLE ANG TINGIN MO KASI LASING KA!

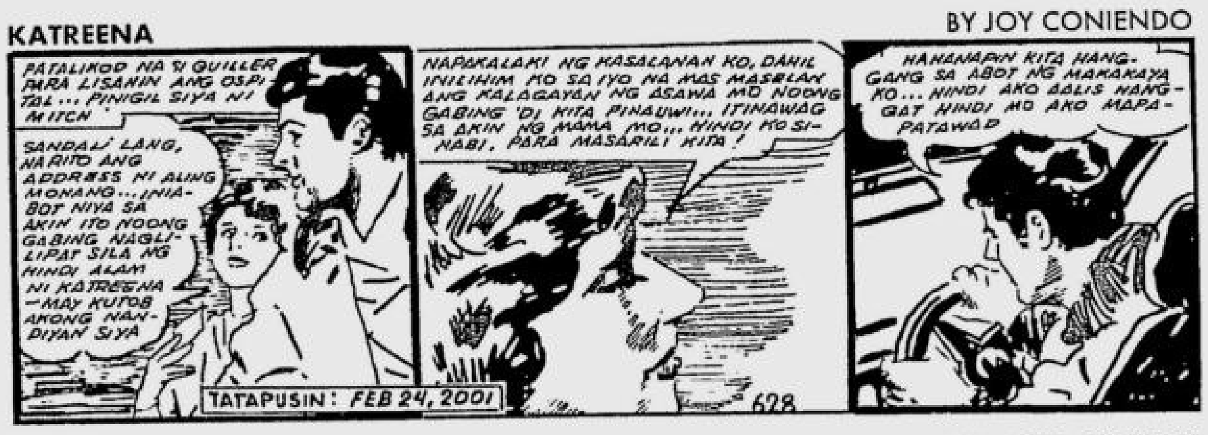
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


NOONG WALA KA PA RITO E NAGKAROON KAMI NG MGA KAIBIGANG MUSLIM...
MGA PIRATA NG BASILAN.
ABA HIMALA.
PiRAta
the FIRST all-oRiginal Polgas NoveL
AT ALL NATIONAL BOOKSTORES AND COMIC QUEST OUTLETS
ANO'NG HIMALA DON?
'YUNG MAGKAROON KA NG KAIBIGAN NA HINDI UMIINOM AT HINDI KUMAKAIN NG BABOY.

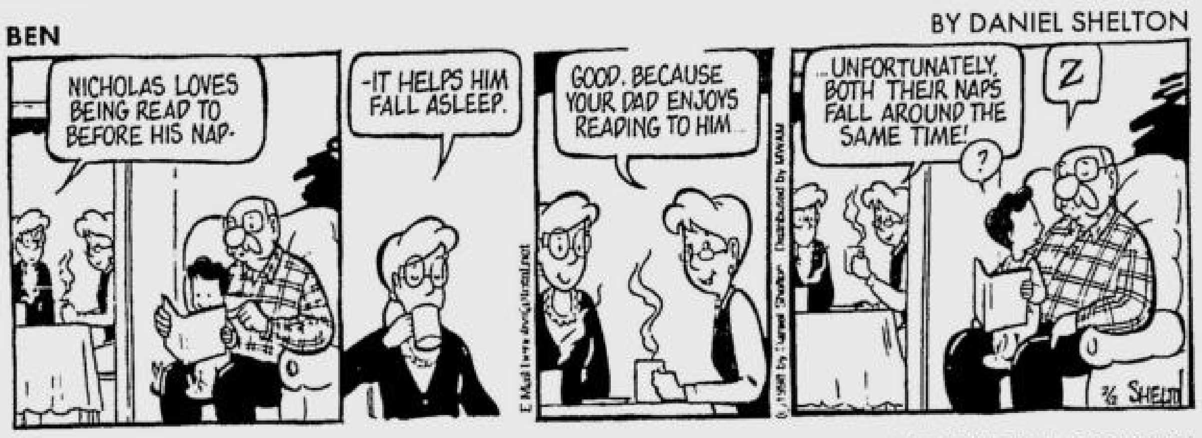
SIMO
BY EDGAR DIONELA


TAPOS ANONG GAGAWIN MO!
EYWAN KO SA 'YO KAYONG NANAGINIP DI, BA?
EDIONELA

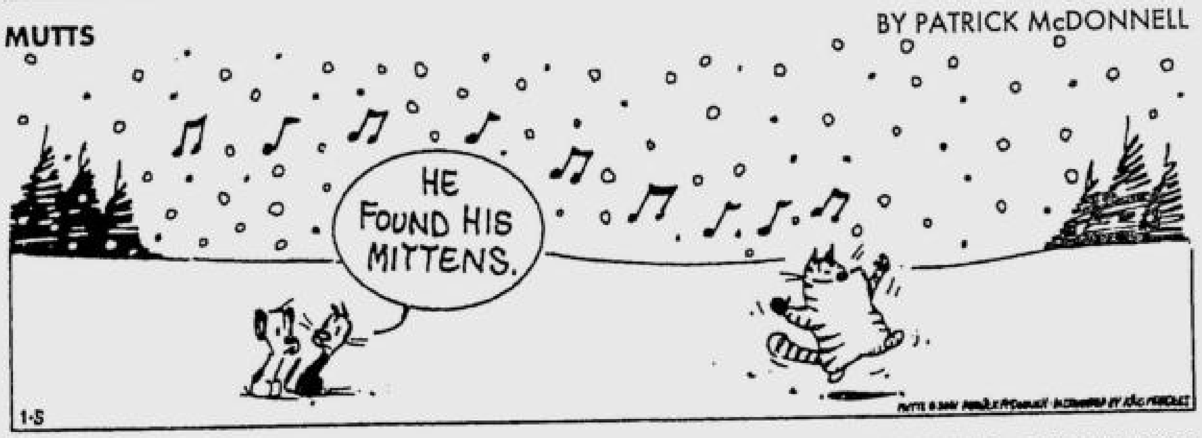
KATREENA
BY JOY CONIENDO


PATALIKOD NA SI QUILLER PARA LISANIN ANG OSPITAL... PINIGIL SIYA NI MITCH
SANDALI LANG, NARITO ANG ADDRESS NI ALING MONANG... INIABOT NIYA SA AKIN ITO NOONG GABING NAGLILIPAT SILA NG HINDI ALAM NI KATREENA —MAY KUTOB AKONG NANDIYAN SIYA
NAPAKALAKI NG KASALANAN KO, DAHIL INILIHIM KO SA IYO NA MAS MASELAN ANG KALAGAYAN NG ASAWA MO NOONG GABING 'DI KITA PINAUWI... ITINAWAG SA AKIN NG MAMA MO... HINDI KO SINABI, PARA MASARILI KITA!
HAHANAPIN KITA HANGGANG SA ABOT NG MAKAKAYA KO... HINDI AKO AALIS HANGGAT HINDI MO AKO MAPAPATAWAD
TATAPUSIN: FEB 24, 2001
628

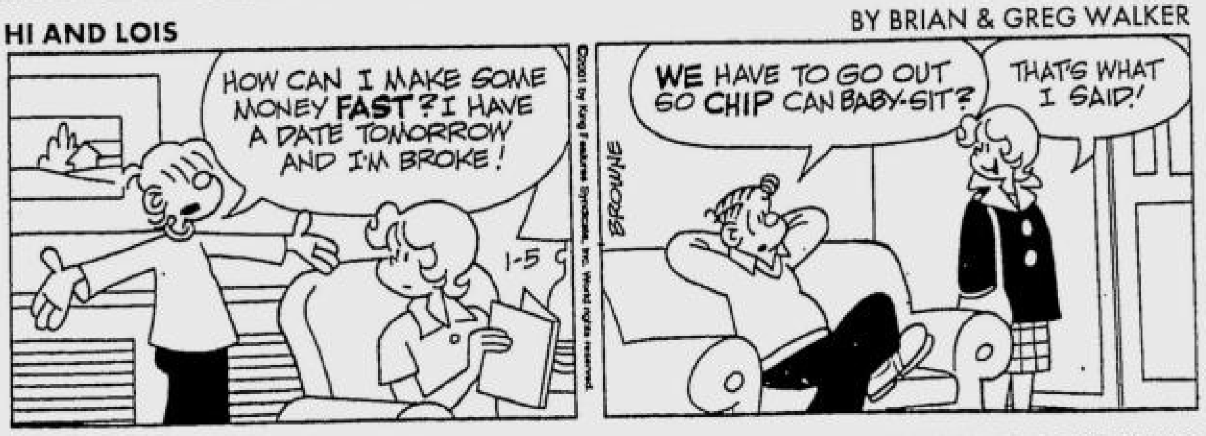
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


NICHOLAS LOVES BEING READ TO BEFORE HIS NAP-
-IT HELPS HIM FALL ASLEEP.
GOOD. BECAUSE YOUR DAD ENJOYS READING TO HIM...
...UNFORTUNATELY, BOTH THEIR NAPS FALL AROUND THE SAME TIME!
Z
?

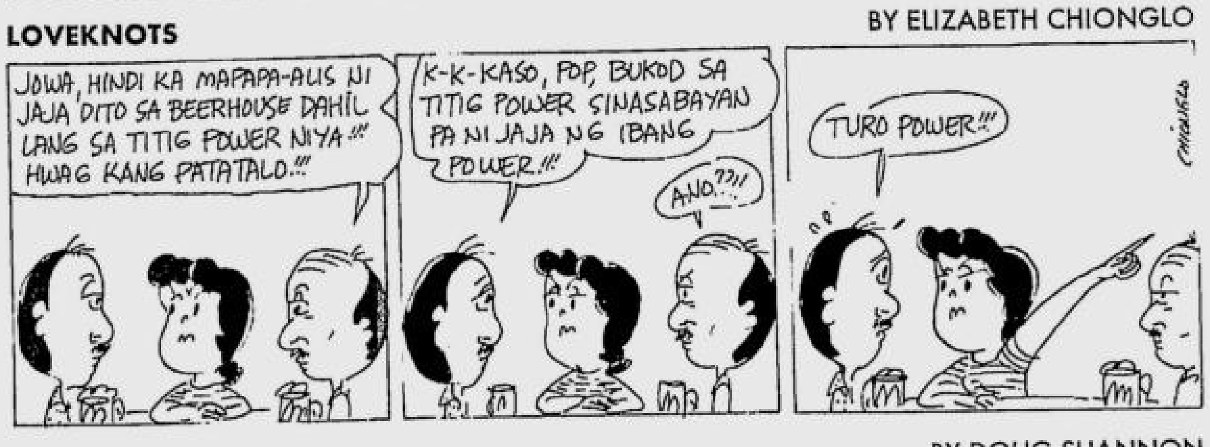
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HE FOUND HIS MITTENS.
1-5

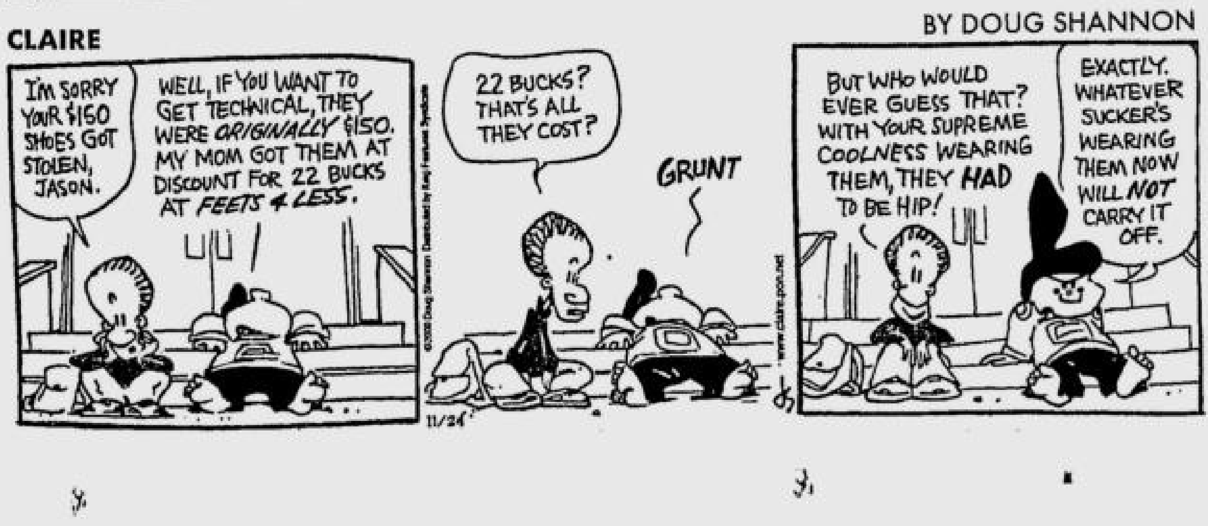
HI AND LOIS
BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


HOW CAN I MAKE SOME MONEY FAST? I HAVE A DATE TOMORROW AND I'M BROKE!
WE HAVE TO GO OUT SO CHIP CAN BABY-SIT?
THAT'S WHAT I SAID!
1-5
BROWNE

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, HINDI KA MAPAPA-ALIS NI JAJA DITO SA BEERHOUSE DAHIL LANG SA TITIG POWER NIYA!!! HWAG KANG PATATALO!!!
K-K-KASO, POP, BUKOD SA TITIG POWER SINASABAYAN PA NI JAJA NG IBANG POWER!!!
ANO??!!
TURO POWER!!!
CHIONGLO

CLAIRE
BY DOUG SHANNON


I'M SORRY YOUR $150 SHOES GOT STOLEN, JASON.
WELL, IF YOU WANT TO GET TECHNICAL, THEY WERE ORIGINALLY $150. MY MOM GOT THEM AT DISCOUNT FOR 22 BUCKS AT FEETS 4 LESS.
22 BUCKS? THAT'S ALL THEY COST?
GRUNT
BUT WHO WOULD EVER GUESS THAT? WITH YOUR SUPREME COOLNESS WEARING THEM, THEY HAD TO BE HIP!
EXACTLY. WHATEVER SUCKER'S WEARING THEM NOW WILL NOT CARRY IT OFF.
11/24

Why do senior citizens grovel for discount privileges?

BUSINESS establishments should give senior citizens the full 20 percent discount privilege granted by law. Unfortunately, some establishments don't. Restaurants, in particular, interpret the discount privileges to their advantage, even at the point of violating the law. Some of these establishments even dupe older citizens by giving them P20 discount, and not the due 20 percent discount on total charges!

Here's a report from one of our partners in consumer protection that shows clearly how senior citizens are cheated and abused by business establishments. Ina Rodriguez reports:

"Many fast-food outlets offering value meals refuse to give the 20 percent discount due senior citizens. They argue that the value meal is already discounted. (We praise McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken for giving senior citizens the full discount even for their value meals.)

"All the Jollibee outlets I have been to—except the one at Rustan's Cubao—honor the senior citizens card. But this particular outlet has a memo posted near the cashier stating that the SC's discount privilege is only good for a P100 purchase. This is just like other eateries that make a fool of our elderly by giving them P20 discount, and not the full 20 percent of the total bill.

"For example, my parents ate at Hapag Kainan in SM City North. Their bill was P293, but their discount was only P20. According to the cashier, it was the owner's strict instruction. Does the owner understand that 20 percent of total charges equals P58.50, not P20? Cashiers at Burger King and Pollo Loco at SM Megamall also deduct P20 from the bill of senior citizens.

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

"Shantung Restaurant at West Avenue and House of Minis at Shoppesville Greenhills only allow full senior citizens' discount if they paid in cash. (Praises to San Jacinto Restaurant at C-5 Road which allows the SC discount whether they pay in cash or credit card.)

"Some drugstores refuse to sell to SC the full quantity of medicine specified in the doctor's prescription order. My grandfather's prescription called for 30 pieces of Iberet Folic Acid but Globus drugstore on Congressional Avenue insisted on giving him only 15 pieces. They insisted it was store policy."

Abuses of senior citizen privileges

Karen Evangelista, a restaurant manager, points out some abuses on the SC privilege. She wrote: "It is clearly stated by the fine print on the back of SC card that the privilege is granted to senior citizens (60 years and above) who have an annual income of P60,000 or less. However, I have dealt with evidently wealthy customers who use their card both for big and small service charges. I remember that wealthy female producer who flaunts around that she actually uses her SC card.

"Some diners think they can get a full 20 percent discount on their bill if they have a SC cardholder in their group. Many times, I have to explain to them that only the SC cardholder in the group is entitled to the discount."

Readers' comments

From R. Darvin of ' Loyola School of Humanities, Ateneo de Manila University: "The Zagu store in Katipunan never runs out of customers. Recently, I had to wait 20 minutes to get my order of *buko pandan*. When my name was called and I claimed my order, I asked for my receipt (we're taught to demand receipts for purchases), the server told me they didn't have any. My friend said other Zagu branches do not issue receipts. I guess customers don't bother, they're just thankful when their orders are finally served." (Just the same, Zagu stores should issue receipts as required by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.)

Mary Grace Riel (c/o <ravish@i-next.net) wrote: I'd like to call the attention of Quikmelt regarding the salted *ensaymada* I bought at the SM Centerpoint. When I opened it at home, it was (already spoiled). It was too late to go back to the store and return it. The following day, I went there and complained to the salesclerk, who insisted that the product was fresh and new when it was sold to me. Then I complained to SM administration but was told to talk to the manager (of store selling Quikmelt). When I called up the manager (a certain Mr. Cris P.) the following day, he told me that I was just making up stories. That was not all. He said he didn't care if I complained to *'kahit sino'ng* Pontius Pilate'. "

E-mail the author at mgiron @csi.com.ph

The blue door is enough to make you curious

WALKING past a series of white doors, the surprise wash color at the end of the corridor hints this isn't your ordinary office. Ushering clients and visitors into Blue Bottle Inc., a 5-year-old design boutique, is a loose pebble "beach" surrounding stepping stones. The unique pebble walk becomes a point of visual interest and creates an illusion of a more expansive floor space with the movement of pebbles with every step. The blending of natural light streaming from sliding glass doors and ceiling lamps gives the office a warm glow mimicking sunsets on a beach.

Working with an eclectic mix of raw and polished elements, Blue Bottle's creative director, Mildred Cid, designed its Makati office to reflect the creative nature of their business. "We didn't want an office with antiseptic white walls that didn't encourage creativity during the 8-hour workday. Innovative color and design is such a huge part of our work that is reflected in the design of our office".

Industrial look

The initial concept for the studio-type office was to create an industrial look, a touchstone in New York's hip manufacturing district, by exposing the water pipes running across the ceiling, and by keeping the natural roughness of the cement walls and floors. This gave Mildred the texture she needed to create a relaxed environment, free from an overly structured appearance that thwarted the office's original layout of free-flowing spaces.

Furnishings are sparse from intricate design, but clean lines dominate with Japanese-inspired bleached wood screens, an unevenly cut *molave* conference table with steel chairs, and lightly stained wood desks that show off its grain.

But what takes centerstage at Blue Bottle is color. Mildred has painted each section of the office with a different color to create a visual partition. The ragging paint technique used on the walls produced irregular strokes, which gave otherwise flat surfaces, dimension and activity.

As a general rule in decorating, using a palette of bright colors always produces a quality of spaciousness. Mildred uses this to her advantage by employing colors ranging from hues of Mediterranean blue to varying degrees of purple that is reminiscent of the rooftops of Santorini, Greece.

Refreshing

Sliding glass doors lead to a veranda overlooking the various high-rises of the Makati area. Not wanting to see the gray of buildings every day, Mildred came up with a clever way of having a room with a view. Scanning photographic backgrounds from magazines, Mildred had them printed on tarpaulins which are now positioned as window and door shapes. "You can tire of curtains easily, and we had already done Roman shades in our last office. Photographic tarpaulins give us an element of escape. The great thing about it is we can change landscapes every so often without changing locations."

The fusion of contemporary detail gives the office a relaxed and unpretentious atmosphere that belies the hectic demands of the advertising industry. Mildred revels in the response Blue Bottle has received from enthusiastic visitors. "It's such a refreshing look for everyone that we have clients wanting to do the same thing to their offices, clients bringing in their friends to see the office, and even people walking in to check what the buzz is about. People are discovering that office doesn't have to mean boring and dull. I think we're helping them see things differently. When you think about it, that's what advertising is all about"

CREATIVE DIRECTOR'S ROOM. Bright apple green washes the walls in "perpetual daylight," as she calls it, with whimsical resin fish accents on the door. Decor complements the wall color with cobalt bottles from Mildred's collection, dried twigs and even functional blueberry G-3's and graphite G-4's that dot the artist's work station.

M'mmwah!

Campbell's®
CONDENSED SOUP
PARIS INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION 1900
Cream of
Mushroom

The best way to get to his heart is through the soup that he loves.

Ikenobo Society holds floral art show in Marikina

OVERALL show chair Mila Sumulong

THE IKENOBO Ikebana Society of Manila, headed by its president, Serapion S. Metilla, will be putting up an Ikenobo ikebana flower arrangement show on Feb. 22-25 at the Marikina Riverbanks Mall, Bonifacio Drive, Marikina City.

Mme. Myriam Ara, wife of the Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines, and Ma. Lourdes Femando, wife of Marikina City Mayor Bayani Femando, will formally open the exhibits on Feb. 22 at 4 p.m.

With the theme "Ikebana para sa Kapayaan," the idea of the show is to disseminate ikebana floral art as a way of life aimed at attaining peace and order for our country. Open free to the public, the arrangements will consist of different Ikenobo styles such as moribana, nageire, shoka, rikka and free styles that will be exhibited by the club members.

Working for the various show committees are: Mila Sumulong, overall show chair; Ina Valdez Conejero, overall show cochair; Thelma Santos and Dr. Lupe Lazaro, finance; Liling Nuguid, Julie Villareal and Lilian Segundo, invitation; Nonette Hubilla and Jenny Ledonio, physical arrangement. Anding Dulalia, Letty Carpio, Ela Gutierrez and Hortense Sobrevinas, documentation; Eddie Guidotti and Adelie Cardenas, security; Dory Bernabe and Nely Chua, ways and means, and Missy Ignacio, Joyce Kato and Linda Limpe, lecture-demonstrations. Taking charge of the reception are Aida Villanueva, Silvia Santos, Carmelita Chua and Ines Valdez Silvestre; John Go Hoc, Wennie Go and Joan Ong, photography; Fely Gupit, Vina Avancena and Mett Metilla, publicity; and Elma Castillo and Aileen Siwa, commercials.

As usual, there will be lecture-demonstrations on the different styles under the Ikenobo School. On Feb. 23, the demonstrators are Cristeta del Rosario and Hortense Sobrevinas; Feb. 24, Liling Nuguid and John Go Hoc, and on the last day, Mila Sumulong and Serapion S. Metilla. All lectures will start at 2:30 p.m. The public is cordially invited.

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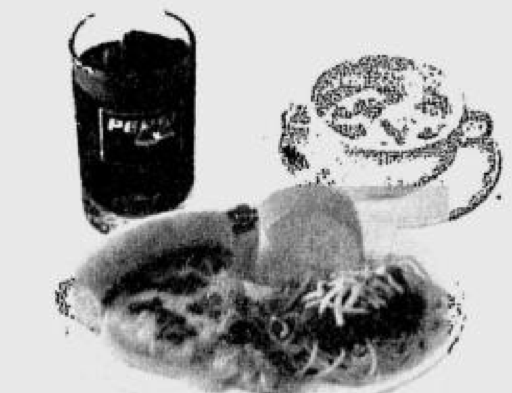

P59 **Meal 1**: A slice of Bacon and Cheese Pizza, Spaghetti w/ Meatsauce, Mushroom Soup, Garlic Bread and a Glass of Pepsi.

P69 **Meal 2**: A slice of Bacon and Cheese Pizza, Spaghetti w/ Meatsauce, French Fries, Mushroom Soup, Garlic Bread and a Glass of Pepsi.

P79 **Meal 3**: A slice of Bacon and Cheese Pizza, Spaghetti w/ Meatsauce, 2 Chicken Wings, Garlic Bread and a Glass of Pepsi.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1184, series 2000

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Email: exofat@germed.com.ph

Dunkin' Darling Donuts
P28
DUNKIN' DONUTS
Pasalubong ng Bayan
See print ads for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 0142, series of 2001.

A study in correspondence

Rachel Alejandro and Lee Robin Salazar complement each other—in style, drama and love

LEE Robin Salazar and Rachel Alejandro share a passion for theater, dining out and long conversations.

PHOTO BY RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO

By Marge C. Enriquez

SINGER Rachel Alejandro was styled against type. Accustomed to tube tops, fitted pants and other body-conscious clothes, Rachel felt "old," wrapped up in black suits, long skirts and stockings.

Meanwhile Lee Robin Salazar looked sleek in black outfits that went well with the interiors of space age, glass, granite and graphic interiors of Glorietta's new telecom shop, The Hub. The occasion was a fashion pictorial that gave off a sense of mystery and incongruity. They were a study in contrast. Robin's clothes evoked "The Matrix" style while Rachel was dressed up like a spy in the Cold War.

Robin can wolf down burgers, fries, chocolate and junk food and keep a 29-inch waistline. Conforming to the waifish images in women's magazines, Rachel took Bangkok pills to lose weight.

Her eyes look bigger and her cheeks are hollow. In her concerts, Rachel's body-conscious costumes took the audience by surprise. A cusp between Aquarius and Pisces, Rachel has the uninhibited traits of an Aquarian and the voluptuous figure and cheekbones of a Piscean.

When she did a pictorial for People Asia magazine, her manager Girlie Rodis asked photographer Jun de Leon, known for his provocative images, why Rachel's sensuality wasn't portrayed.

In one layout, Rachel was photographed with her arms covering her bare bosom. Months later, she was a body calendar girl in Metro magazine. Rachel's subtly seductive image was the icing on the cake.

Acting rewards

The substance is her theater career. Lately the recording artist has been focusing on theater. She has appeared in the Filipino musical "firewaterwoman," and the comedy "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress." This month she is performing with the Singapore Repertory Theater's production of "Rent," where she plays the meaty role of Mimi.

On tackling a role, she said, "I think about the character's objective in every scene. It's just getting your point across. For a more dramatic or emotional scene wherein it would require me to break down, I try to think of something similar in life or I try to relate to what's happening to my character. In 'Rent,' Mimi overhears that she's dying, I try to imagine that I'm in a situation that I'm so sick that people are talking about me. I think about people that I love. And what it would be like to say goodbye to them. Then I sing 'Goodbye Love.'"

Asked why she never auditioned for "Miss Saigon," even if Lea Salonga and her mother had been raving about her, Rachel replied, "I thought that 'Miss Saigon' is Lea and Lea is 'Miss Saigon.' If I were buying tickets, I wouldn't want to see anybody else but Lea doing Kim. I'd rather do something wherein there would be less of a comparison," said Rachel, adding that her voice is not suited to Kim's requirements.

Recording

Rachel will return to the Philippines to do a concert in the Las Piñas Bamboo Organ festival on Feb. 24 after Singapore. Although she's focused on theater, she owes much of her success to the concert and recording scenes. Lately, there has been a dry spell of Original Pilipino Music on the radio.

"I find that sad. In the late '80s and early '90s a lot of OPM was being played. It's like we've all had to find alternative things to focus on. I've avoided revivals. I think when artists came out with an album of just revivals, creativity stopped. People stopped coming up with original songs. I think that's why the recording industry didn't grow," she said.

"The objective has changed. When recording companies come out with albums, they ask what people want rather than make something good or original. When you come out with something original, they say it might not be appreciated because they haven't heard anything like that before."

She recalled the era of her father Hajji Alejandro when OPM flourished. Today she still performs some of her father's hits such as "Nakapagtataka," "Tag-Araw sa Tag-Ulan" and "May Minamahal."

If Rachel had things her way, she'd record a dance album. For Viva Records, she's doing ballads, the stuff she has been associated with. "That's what people like especially if you've already been established. It's hard to break out and do something different," she said.

Single father

Offstage, Rachel spends time with dancer-turned-actor Lee Robin Salazar. She prefers to keep her privacy regarding her romance. At work, she maintains her professionalism.

"My work is bigger than me. That's what kept me going. It's been deeply ingrained in me that I don't want to let other people down. When I take on a job I feel that it's my responsibility to do the best that I can. I'm not the type that if I fight with my boyfriend to hell with recording or the company show. I take pride that no one in my workplace would know I had a personal problem because they will get what they would be getting if I didn't have a problem," she said.

He appeared in such movies as "Phone Sex," "Sana Ikaw na Nga" and

A STUDY/ p.D8

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PHOTOS BY RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO

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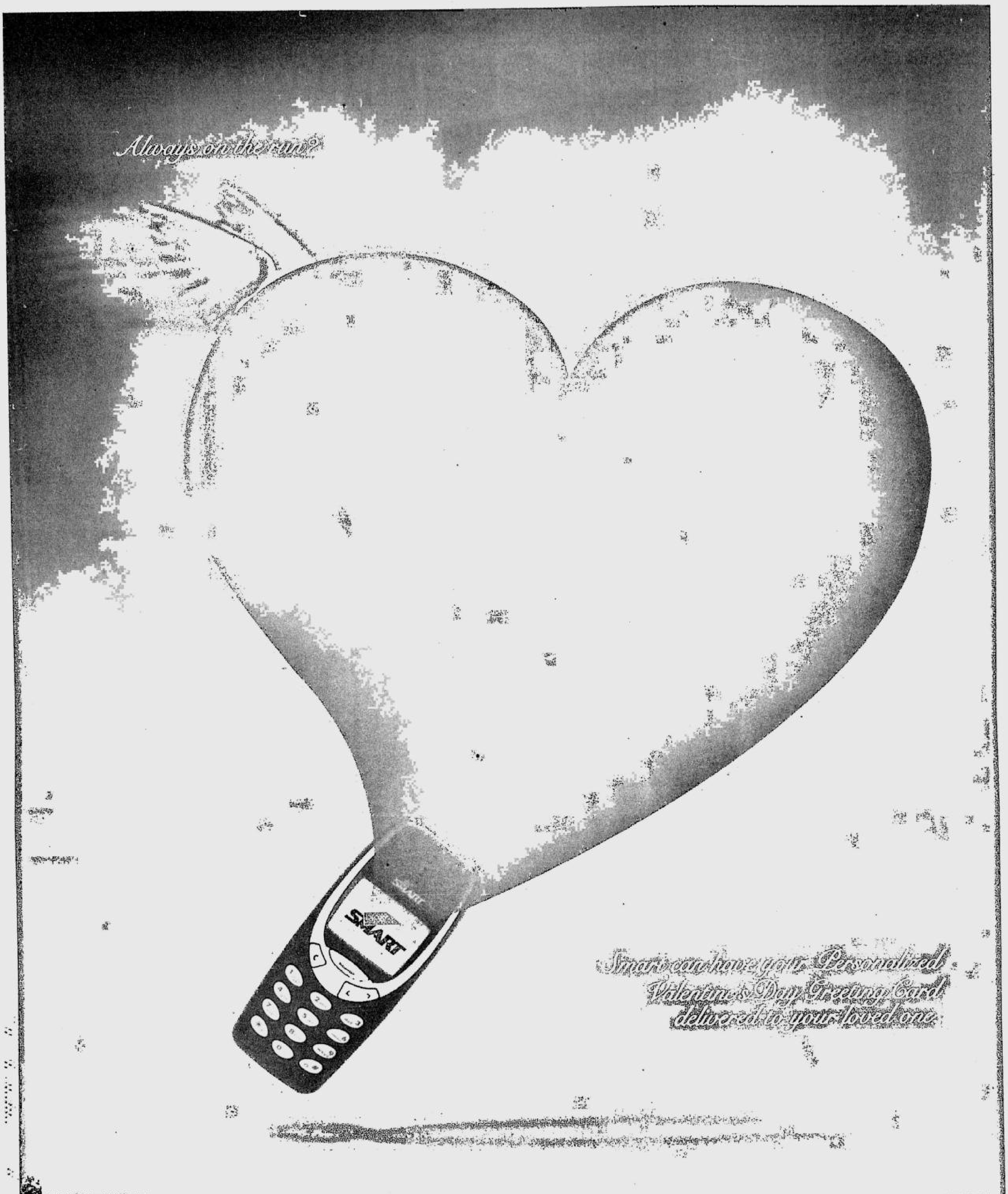
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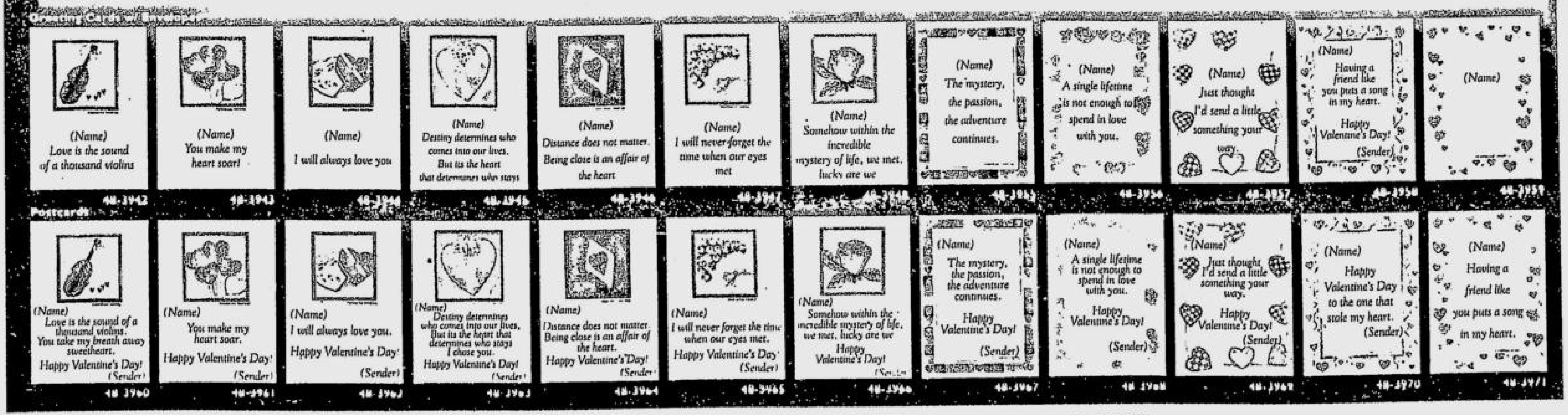
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the heart
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time when our eyes
met
48-3947

(Name)
Somehow within the
incredible
mystery of life, we met,
lucky are we
48-3948

(Name)
The mystery,
the passion,
the adventure
continues.
48-3955

(Name)
A single lifetime
is not enough to
spend in love
with you.
48-3956

(Name)
Just thought
I'd send a little
something your
way.
48-3957

(Name)
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friend like
you puts a song
in my heart.
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Valentine's Day!
(Sender)
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sweetheart.
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(Sender)
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(Name)
You make my
heart soar.
Happy Valentine's Day!
(Sender)
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(Name)
I will always love you.
Happy Valentine's Day!
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48-3962

(Name)
Destiny determines
who comes into our lives.
But its the heart that
determines who stays
I chose you.
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(Name)
Distance does not matter.
Being close is an affair of
the heart.
Happy Valentine's Day!
(Sender)
48-3964

(Name)
I will never forget the time
when our eyes met.
Happy Valentine's Day!
(Sender)
48-3965

(Name)
Somehow within the
incredible mystery of life,
we met, lucky are we
Happy
Valentine's Day!
(Sender)
48-3966

(Name)
The mystery,
the passion,
the adventure
continues.
Happy
Valentine's Day!
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(Name)
A single lifetime
is not enough to
spend in love
with you.
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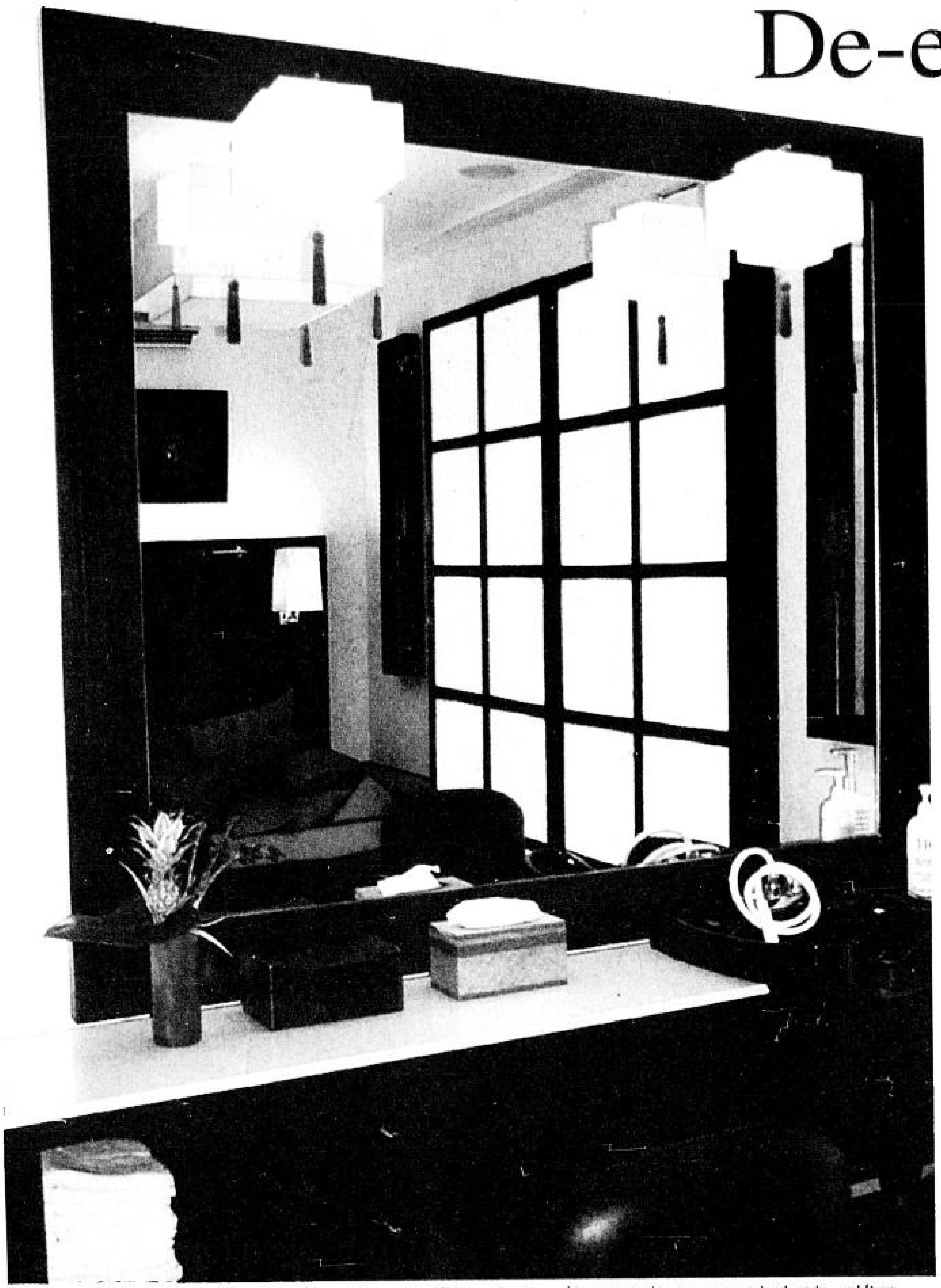
De-emphasizing stress

Emphasis salon at Rockwell conjures tranquility and ease to provide balm for the tired soul

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA
PICTORIAL DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA



MIRROR in the private room visually enlarges the space. Tranquil colors of brown and beige are perked up by uplifting colors. Shoji panels buffer the noise outside.

THE MODERN lifestyle is treacherous. People sacrifice their health to make money, and then lose money to regain their well-being. By worrying about the future, they forget the present. They live neither for today nor for tomorrow. As a one poet described, "... they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived."

In the long run, people break the connection between themselves and the world. The senses, the mediums by which the soul can experience the world, are taken for granted. To regain the equilibrium between body and spirit, the beauty industry has been setting up spas and spa products. By inciting the senses, people can learn to relax and focus on the present.

This explains the boom in spas and salons. This is the reason for Emphasis salon's existence.

It's a brainchild of Teng Roma who has been "talking heads," figuratively, with Manila's rich and famous. He chose architect-interior designer Conrad Onglao to interpret an Oriental theme since some of the best spas in the world are in Asia. Onglao said what attracted him to the project was that the salon's unique concept which was compatible with Rockwell Center's philosophy.

Emphasis aims to make its clients take a break from the mind's routine concerns and getting them into an atmosphere of sense-impressions, replete with unusual floral arrangements, soothing massages, aromatic hair and body treatments, fusion gamelan music, healthy cuisine and eventually some cultural shows. Designed as an ultimate salon, it not only offers basic services like hairstyling, nail care and makeup; it also provides a sanctuary where you can be pampered, blissfully cocooned away from the frenetic pace of metro living. The hours extend till past 10 for people who want to indulge themselves after dinner or work.

Glass walls in the main styling area breakdown the barrier between the interior and the exterior so that the view of the outside is claimed. Unusual flower arrangements near the pocket garden become a visual connection to the view inside, creating the feeling of a spacious styling area.

While other salons install marble or granite flooring, Emphasis makes bold use of oak for a warm feeling. The styling mirrors are framed by chunky *tanguile*, stained like the African dark wood called wenge. Wall partitions are bordered in brown.

Adding to the Oriental touch are rice paper lamps and alcoves, decorated with Cambodian, Malaysian and Japanese artifacts. A narrow hallway is enlivened with bold colors which serves as a mini art gallery. Indeed the Zen philosophy is reflected in areas to emphasize objections. The visitors' attention is drawn to the texture, shape and colors of these objects.

The private rooms are designed for VIPs who value discretion or clients who demand the best. If you don't want to be seen, you pass through the back and are led to one of the sanctuaries.

The neutral color scheme is contrasted with accents of red, yellow, green and aubergine. The bright accessories energize the room and boost flagging vitality of any visitor. In other private rooms, the color schemes either have a gentle feel to it or give off an ambience of meditation. Jim Thompson silk and Cambodian silk drapes, shades and spreads add luxury.Throw pillows are mix of Shanghai Tang and local design.

In any Onglao' project, mood lighting plays a special role in creating ambience.

There are multifunctional furniture like the couch which can be a massage bed or a dining table or the manicurist's stool which also has storage drawers.

Onglao is modest about this project, explaining that he worked within a budget. "I had fun," he said.

In the long run, however, people will come to Emphasis because of their friendship with Teng Roma and his staffers. He imparted refined manners and gracious living to his staffers. We recall during the salon's construction, Mr. Teng, as his staffers call him, would serve his loyal clients in Renée Salud's shop. Or they would go to Rockwell's mock-up unit and get their haircut in the bathroom.

There's something that money can't buy—sincerity.

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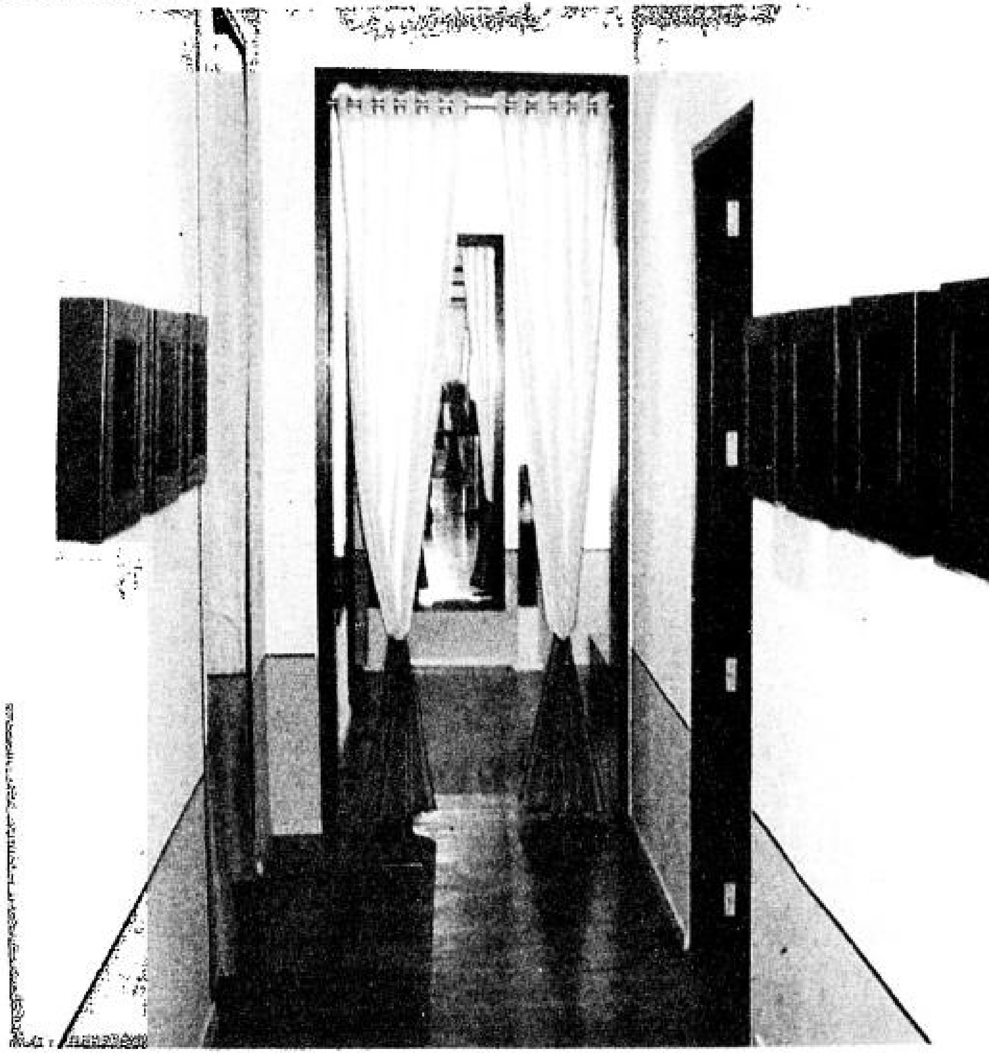

NARROW hallway lined with alcoves to display artworks

BRIGHT tropical uniforms designed by Cesar Gaupo contrast with the neutral tones of the interiors.

ZEN-STYLE BATHROOM. The simplicity is a defense against the confusion of pomp and glamour. It is surrounded by refined textures, subtle color tones.

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Makeup with many uses

PHOTOS BY RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO

WOMEN on the go will appreciate the simplicity and convenience of Aqualumieres, the latest cosmetic offering of Chanel. The eight-color compact allows users to create an infinite number of color permutations for morning- and eveningwear.

SINGER-ACTRESS Rachel Alejandro goes for smokey makeup by Eric Maningat.

Aqualumieres allows colors to be used on their own or mixed together for a wide range of hues in the season's light-hearted tones of gold, crimson, copper, purple and deep brown. It can be used dry to create sheer colors and highlights, or with water to produce rich and intense solid tones. Aqualumieres uses a new generation of iridescent pigments that have reflective qualities, which produce a warm, natural glow.

For women who find themselves hopping from one appointment to the next, this color palette, packaged in a single black compact with the signature Chanel look, can easily become a necessity as it can be applied on different parts of the face. Sheer colors are ideal highlights to the cheeks, lips and the arch of the brow bone while intense and solid tones can accentuate facial contours and create drama to eyelids and lips. The compact was developed with a balanced mix of vegetable waxes and specially treated powders to produce a strong hold that guarantees a fine and powdery texture throughout the day yet is easy to remove in the evening.

Aqualumieres is available at all Rustan's outlets.

EX-MODEL Bessie Badilla-del Castillo wears sheer makeup for the summer by Victor Ortega of Emphasis Salon.

Happy to get a makeover

TO CELEBRATE the anniversary of Clinique's Happy fragrances, Rustan's Makati has organized a makeover event at Glorietta 4.

Women can sample Clinique's skin-care products, the latest makeup and finish off with its fragrances. Patrick Rosas' team will be doing free makeovers until Feb. 15. Clinique is the No. 1 makeup brand in Rustan's. It could attributed to the customers' faith in its gentle, hypoallergenic formulas.

Clinique has upgraded its makeup in formulation and color. It replaced the Pore Minimizer foundation for oily skin with the Clarifying Makeup. It's not messy and great for the summer days, then the skin gets shinier.

For women on the go, the City Stick foundation fits into any purse. It's creamy but has a demi-matte finish. Great for quick touch-ups.

The big news is the launch of the High-Impact Shadows. Previously, women complained that Clinique's shadows faded quickly. High-Impact, as the name implies, promises to deliver bold strokes of color in one application. There are special treated pigments that cling to the skin and light diffusing properties to minimize the lines. The Reach Out mascara lengthens and thickens without clumps.

Try the Cool It Color gloss stick. It really feels cool when you wear it.

MAKEUP artist Toto tries the new products on a customer.

VOILA! She's wearing the spring-summer look.

PHOTOS BY JOHNNY VILLENA

MAKEUP artist Ricky Dalu evens out the client's skin tone.

Read my lips

L'OREAL'S New Colour Riche introduces its newest lipstick, an innovative formula which combines dazzling color and comfort. It has a nonsmudge, antifeathering formula which moisturizes and softens lips.

The Colour Riche Creme Lipstick's formula contains oils and skin-care agents with emollient properties. Its antidryness agents and Vitamin E guarantee comfort throughout the day so lips are perfectly hydrated. Its radiance oil, which blends pigments and pearly glints, intensifies the lipstick's shine and color.

Its acelylated lanolin prevents the color from running or feathering up to two hours. It retains its freshness as if it had just been applied.

PHOTOS BY RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO

clothes and accessories.
spring rolls
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EVEN women can wear a man's Scuba GMT stainless steel watch by Bulgari

Race against time

If you look at time as nature's sense of flow, then you'll learn to relax

PHOTOS BY RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO

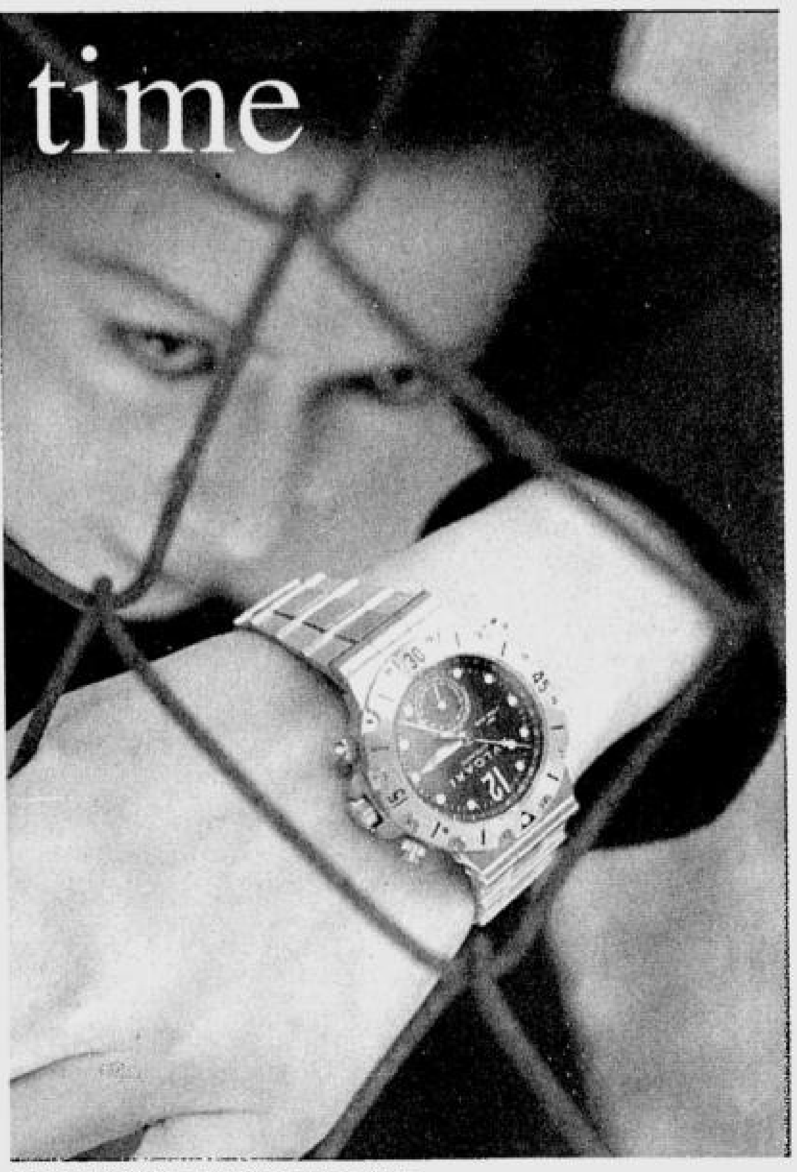
AS the end of a weekend or a holiday nears, we feel that the quality of our free time has become subtly jeopardized. At the start of a vacation or a day-off, we cherish the sense of time stored up—an account from which no debits have yet to be drawn.

Why? We have not yet understood time as the means that lets us relax, rather than an impediment that keeps us from enjoying life to the fullest. We have to let go of this notion that time is a valuable, a quickly vanishing commodity that has to be filled with events to make life rewarding. If we view time as a means of contentment, then we have taken a valuable step toward balancing our lives.

Our lives are ruled by the watch. However mechanized, time is a human innovation made to help us. We must not let the measurement of time control our lives, or we will subvert ourselves in a self-fulfilling cycle of distress. Look at the nature of time and not allow clock time to feed our minds. Live more fully within the moment by synchronizing our inner self more accurately with the world outside. Listen to your body clock; understand the seasons and other cycles of nature.

Time is not a sequence of activities. If you look at it as nature's way of preventing everything from happening at once, then you'll learn to relax.

MODEL: BESSIE BADILLA
HAIR AND MAKEUP
BY VICTOR ORTEGA
FOR TENG ROMA
OF EMPHASIS SALON,
ROCKWELL
CLOTHES: CK CALVIN KLEIN
AND ANNE KLEIN



SCUBA GMT watch with rubber strap

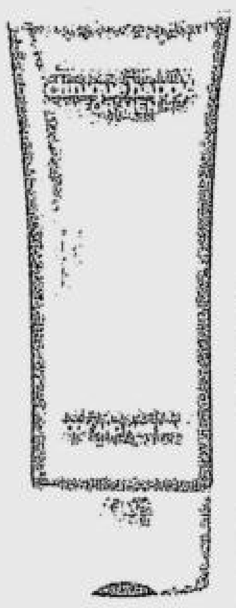
ECCENTRIC BUT CHIC

Louis Vuitton's LST belt can work with a suit or weekend slacks. Its brushed palladium buckle complements the coffee-colored glossy skin.

Get groomed

THE YEAR of the Snake will be even happier with the introduction of Clinique's new Happy For Men Body and Hair Wash and Clinique's Happy For Men Deodorant Natural Spray. These two new products join Clinique's Happy For Men freshly scented grooming line.

Guys can jump-start their bath routine with the dense lather of Clinique's Happy For Men Body and Hair Wash. A two-in-one orange gel cleanses hair and body with energizing and refreshing bubbles that wash away dirt, cleanly leaving only a delicate trace of Happy For Men's signature citrus and exceptional woodsy scent. Hair and body feel clean and invigorated and the light aroma complements the other products in the Happy For Men line, including the After Shave, After Shave Balm, Antiperspirant Deodorant and the original Happy For Men Fragrance.



And don't get dressed without Clinique's Happy For Men Deodorant Natural Spray, a non-aerosol spray that combats odor and keeps skin feeling fresh and clean with a hint of citrus. Clinique's Happy For Men Deodorant Natural Spray can be used after bathing as an underarm deodorant or as an all-over body spray.

Clinique's Happy For Men Body and Hair Wash and Clinique's Happy For Men Deodorant Natural Spray are allergy-tested.

GREEN necktie, P339

Prepare for summer

BY CAMILLE T. CRUZ
PHOTOS BY ROGER MARGALLO

IN THE PAST months, there was comfort in the air—a steady cool temperature that I wished could have lasted forever. Unfortunately, the past few days reminded me that something strong was coming. Summer. Whether we like it or not, we have to prepare for the onslaught of summer.

Its coming is unmistakable, giving you only two options: dress up or sag down

It is better that we begin to bring out our lightweight gear for all occasions. Or start buying some.

In a man's wardrobe, there is a favorite due to limited required clothing in the working place: the shirt. Sometimes it is safest to stick to white. A white shirt is the most basic. It matches all colors. It is light and will keep you cool.

You may also try the electric blue classic shirt. Shades of brown will likewise do—a light beige tone will go with most gray slacks.

It is best to avoid a black shirt for work. It probably would not be "corporately correct." It is a formal color and not meant to be worn for corporate wear. It is more of a "going-out" shirt. For women, it is acceptable if worn under a suit—depending on the dress code in the work site.

Shorts are also necessary to survive the heat. Of course, what you wear on the bottom counts, too. If your plans take you to a place where you have to play a little, a pair of striped shorts for a change won't do any harm. Around the beach or the poolside, it can add a little bit of flavor to your look and bring out the fun in you.

For an easy-going occasion, a comfortable pair of khakis is safe. Instead of your typical zip-front or button-down waistline look, a drawstring closure will be fine. It can be worn with a semi-fitted t-shirt tucked-in; nothing too Ricky Martin-like. A plain pants, not so loose, will do. Also, think about how some boy bands dress in their music videos, where they wear a white *sando* underneath a white shirt open and unbuttoned. Such look would be best on a lean body.

To add a little bit of excitement to the T-shirt, try one with a print on the front. A print of a Renaissance painting is stylish.

An alternative to the leather belt is the canvas. A belt in military green is a fresh way to buckle-up. For casual days to wear with jeans, this belt will keep you strapped. The military edge has become trendy now, even in neckties and other accessories.

Dream up ways to look light, feel good and think fresh.

E-mail your comments to camille_cruz@hotmail.com

ELECTRIC blue shirt, P999

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STRIPED shorts, P449

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UP Masscom homecoming

GOINGS-ON

THE ORGANIZING Committee of the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communications (UP-CMC) Homecoming 2000, chaired by Cristina Toblia-Astudillo, is inviting all graduates of UP-CMC to a grand reunion and homecoming on Feb. 10, at the Pergola, Ayala Heights Village, QC. Call Tina Astudillo at 816-2915 or 931-8663; Becs Tetangco at 0917-5328747; Avie Gochoco Perez at 821-7607; or Che Serrano at 921-1966.

SEMINAR. The Paul VI Institute of Liturgy in Malaybalay, Bukidnon will hold a seminar on "Liturgical Images, Vestments and Vessels," Feb. 12-16. It will discuss pertinent liturgical and artistic guidelines on the production of vestments and vessels. Lecturers are Fr. Anscar Chupangco, OSB and Dom Martin de Jesus Gomez, OSB. Call 221-2898 or fax 088-221-2897.

PERFORMANCE. The Bamboo Organ Foundation Inc. will present its 26th International Bamboo Organ Festival on Feb.23 to Mar. 2, 8 p.m., at the Las Piñas Church.

SHOW. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts and Puppeteers Association of the Philippines present "Tali-Galaw," a marionette show, on Feb.10, 17 and 24, at the Museo Pambata, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

REUNION. The US Embassy will host a reunion of Filipino alumni of the United States International Visitor (IV) Program in Manila on Feb. 17. The event will be the first-ever reunion of the more than 500 who have taken part in the prestigious US government-sponsored professional exchange program. Call 525-0427 or 525-0426.

HOMECOMING. The St. Theresa's Alumnae Association (STAA) Manila invites members to the annual homecoming on Feb. 18, 4 p.m., at the Hotel Inter-Continental Ballroom. Call 740-1810.

SEMINAR. Insam Corporation, exclusive distributor of Cheong-Kwan-Jang Korean Red Ginseng, recently launched a livelihood program aimed at providing an alternative source of income through the marketing and dealership of the King of Herbs. The Insam livelihood seminars are scheduled on Feb. 10 at the G/F Tatlong Hari Building, 502 Real St., Almanza Uno, Las Piñas; Feb. 24 at the Dynasty Court Hotel, Cagayan de Oro City; and Feb. 28 in Davao City. Admission is free. Call 523-6211 (Manila); (082) 222-7399 (Davao) and (088) 851-1875 (Cagayan de Oro).

VALENTINE PROMO. Abenson holds a Valentine promo dubbed as "Perfect Together" super-value package, on which the items on sale are paired together, with one discounted price tag. Promo runs until Feb. 15.

LECTURE. On-Live Video Workshops Inc., will be holding a one-day lecture course dubbed "What Works for Kids: A TV Writing Workshop for Children's TV Shows," on Feb. 24, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at Suite 906 Future Point Plaza I, 112 Panay Ave., QC. Call 412-7895/9312. or e-mail online@netgazer.com.ph.

GRAND DRAW. Cherry Foodarama celebrates its 48th anniversary with its "Double Grand Draw" on Feb. 14. Prizes at stake include a brand-new Nissan Sentra Exalta and other home appliances.

WORKSHOP. Robinsons Town Mall Los Baños provides the perfect venue for housewives to further hone their talents and skills in the "Mothers' Circle Workshop" series, which will be held at the mall's activity area. These ongoing series are held every Saturday afternoon until March 31, 1-5 p.m. and will offer the latest techniques on candy-making, crafts-making like stuffed toy-making, bead accessories, specialty bag-making, gifts and souvenirs. Call 633-9396 or 633-7641 to 90, locals 175 or 176.

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Neckwear adds luxury to austerity of business suit

FOR YEARS, fashion historians and sociologists predicted the demise of neckties, the one element of a man's attire with no obvious function. Perhaps they are merely part of an inherited tradition. As long as world and business leaders continue to wear ties, young executives will follow suit, and ties will remain a key to the boardroom. On the other hand, there does seem to be some aesthetic value in wearing a tie. In addition to covering the buttons of the shirt and giving emphasis to the verticality of a man's body (in much the same way that the buttons on a military uniform do), it adds a sense of luxury and richness, color and texture, to the austerity of the dress shirt and business suit.

The proper width of a tie, and one that will never be out of style, is 3¼ inches (2¾-3½ inches are also acceptable). As long as the proportions of men's clothing remain true to a man's body shape, this width will set the proper balance. Though many of the neckties sold today are cut in these widths, the section of the tie where the knot is made has remained thick—a holdover from the fat, napkinlike ties of the 1960s. This makes tying a small, elegant knot more difficult. Yet the relationship of a tie's knot to the shirt collar is an important consideration. If the relationship is proper, the knot will never be so large that it spreads the collar or forces it open, nor will it be so small that it will become lost in the collar.

BLUE tie with pin dots

BLUE and gray foulard-printed tie

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GEOMETRIC print

All fine ties are cut on the bias, which means they have been cut across the fabric. This allows them to fall straight after the knot has been tied, without curling. A simple test consists of holding a tie across your had. If it begins to twirl in the air, it was probably not cut on the bias and it should not be purchased.

Ties derive their body and fullness by means of an additional inner lining. Besides giving body to the tie, the lining helps the tie hold its shape. The finest quality ties today are lined with 100-percent wool and are generally made only in Europe. Most other quality ties use a wool mixture. The finer the tie, the higher the wool content. Fine linings are marked with a series of gold bars that are visible if you open up the back of the tie. The more bars, the heavier the lining.

After you've examined the lining, take a look at the tie just above the spot where the two sides come together to form an inverted V. In most quality ties, you will find a stitch joining the back flaps. This is called the bar tack and it helps maintain the shape of the tie.

Necktie knots

There are several standard ways to knot a tie: the four-in-hand knot (which dates back to the days of the coach and four in England, when the men on top of the coach would knot their ties in this manner to prevent them from flying in the wind while they were driving); the Windsor knot, purportedly invented by the Duke of Windsor, though he later disclaimed the invention; and the half-Windsor.

Though many men considered good dressers use the Windsor or half-Windsor knot, it has always struck me as giving too bulbous an appearance. For the most part, the majority of men simply do not look good wearing this knot, though there are a few notable exceptions, particularly Douglas Fairbanks Jr. In any case, the Windsor knot not only looks good when worn with a spread collar, which is how the Duke of Windsor originally wore it. My preference remains for the standard four-in-hand knot. It is the smallest and most precise of knots, and it has been the staple of the natural-shouldered, British-American style of dress in this country and in England for the past 50 years.

But whether one chooses the four-in-hand, the Windsor or the half-Windsor, each should be tied so that there is a dimple or crease in the center of the tie just below the knot. This forces the tie to billow and creates a fullness that is the secret to its proper draping.

Alan Flusser

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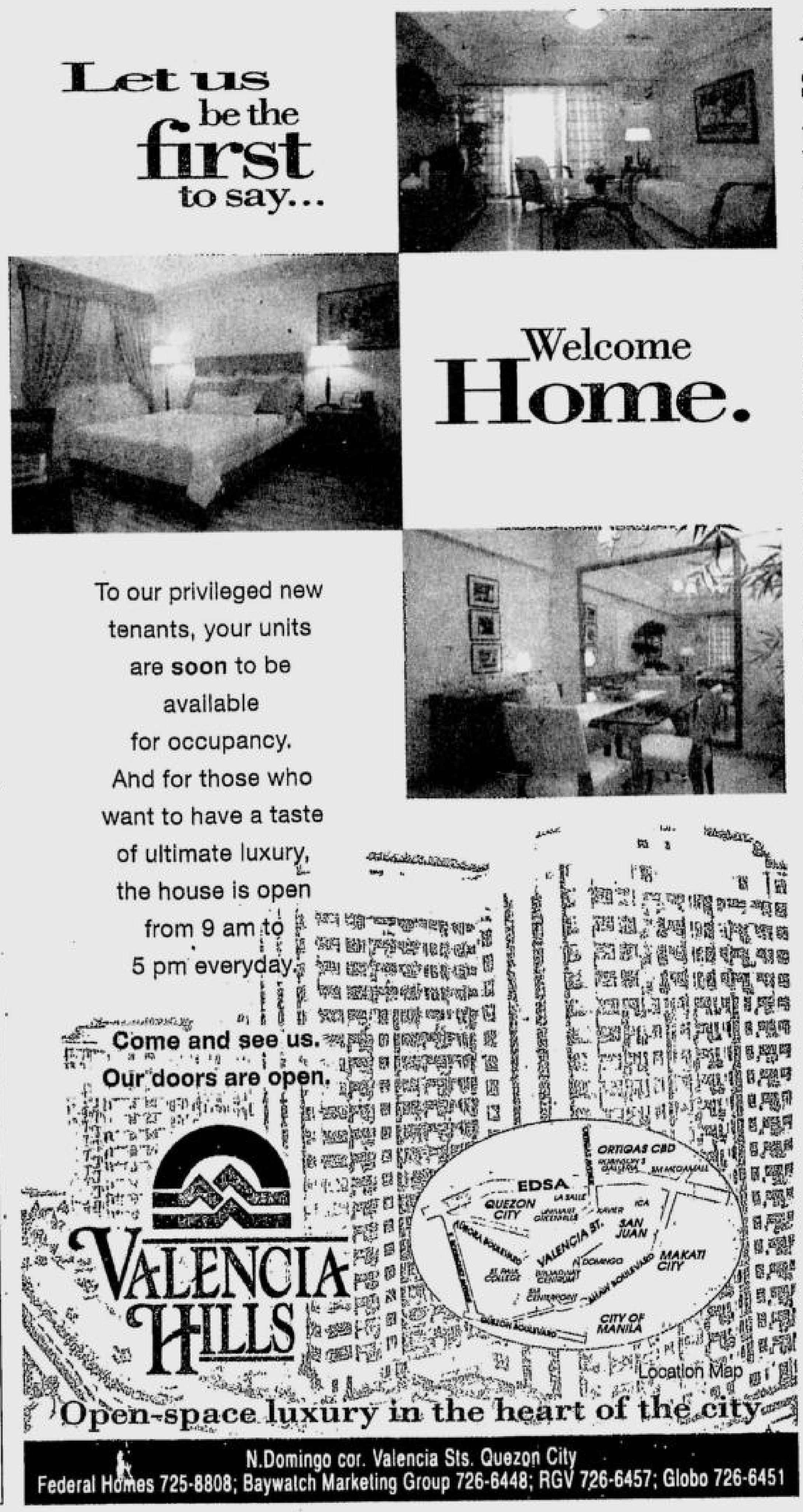
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A study in . . .

(From page D1)

"Takot sa Dilim." Robin, as friends call him, is more passionate about theater. Robin was a dancer for the Maneouvres when he was in high school. Since he had a sculpted body and a strong projection, he was encouraged to do television and the movies.

He enjoys the discipline of rehearsals and the rapport with the people.

"I like to share whatever talents that I have that I know some people would appreciate."

His greatest role is that of a single father. When he discovered that he had gotten his then girlfriend pregnant, he was surprised he wasn't afraid. Robin had a daughter, Isabel, at 19. However, the relationship with Isabel's mother didn't work out.

"That was tough for me. I'd like to think I surpassed the obstacles. It's easier now for me."

He attributes his triumph to his patience and inner strength. "I'm very spiritual. I've been holding on to life—not only mine but also to the one that I brought into this world.

He has been enjoying the rituals of fatherhood from budgeting, changing diapers, mixing the formula to bringing Isabel to the mall.

"I think it's one of the more beautiful things that make me the person that I am now. However strong or weak I am, I feel I'm a better person," he said.

Rachel adores Isabel. "I think she appreciates how I am as a father," said Robin.

More than anything, anyone would rate Robin highly because of the respect he offers to people. "I have the comfort of knowing that I have nothing but respect and warmth for others."

In return, people give him respect.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LIFESTYLE

Trend Spotting

It is the ultimate irony that no less than Mr. Mike Arroyo has sought to connect to this gay who was disowned by his father.
Behind the story of Ricky Reyes' great wealth is a love withheld

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The 'First Bakla' meets the First Gentleman

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

TWO weekends ago, we hung out with **Ricky Reyes** in his Tagaytay home—he, **Ethel**, **Annie** and I, just four of us girls bonding in a belated celebration of Ethel's "40th" birthday (also there was Ethel's son **Alex**). It reminded us of the many weekends years ago when we used to frequent this getaway, except that now "Mother Ricky's" highland home has expanded to include a multistoried guesthouse that accedes to the hilly terrain, a nursery of bromeliads inspired in part by the garden of Ricky's friend **Ming Ramos**, and a roofdeck that gives a breathtaking panorama of the lake and the houses that mushroom in a variety of designs and architectures.

(Tagaytay will surely be a hit destination this Valentine's. A tip to those wanting to escape the crowd: off Ligaya Drive, which is near Ricky's house, is a dead-end ridge that offers an expansive and most private horizon of Tagaytay, perfect for picnicking couples who want to just spread out a mat and enjoy the peace and quiet over red wine, French bread and cheese. Our staff discovered this during a planning session years ago. Unfortunately we can't say if this scenic open spot has remained undiscovered by the crowd to this day. But then again, off-the-beaten-track destinations for Valentine's is not the business of this column.)

Productive meeting

In our Edsa II-hangover chat, Ricky revealed that the First Spouse **Mike Arroyo** invited him and Ming to a meeting about the projects of the former first lady. It was a very productive meeting at AIM where Mr. Arroyo offered to get involved in Ms Ramos' Clean and Green campaign, the Helping Hand Foundation in Smokey Mountain, and especially in the Pasig River rehabilitation program. Mr. Arroyo said he felt strongly about the Pasig River's rehabilitation, which apparently had been set back the past two years. It seems its pollution level has risen again; if at the time of Ms Ramos' departure from the Palace, the progress of rehabilitation was, say, on a scale of 10, already 5, today it's down to 3 again.

Ms Ramos readily agreed to make the First Gentleman the honorary chair of the Pasig rehabilitation program, while Ms Ramos will continue to spearhead the project. It will be remembered that at the start of the Estrada administration, when Ms Ramos met with Dr. **Loi Ejercito**, the headstrong outgoing first lady didn't turn over the reins of the Pasig program to the incoming first lady because she said the Pasig program is a private foundation with adequate private funding. Ms Ramos wanted not only to continue being active in it but also to remain as its head. As it would turn out, Doctor Loi focused her energy and time instead on her medical missions.

However, today, obviously Ms Ramos and the First Gentleman see eye to eye about the Pasig rehabilitation and livelihood projects—with the "First Bakla," as Ricky has always been introduced by **FVR**, as go-between. (After the military defection of Edsa II, do we need a go-between?) The "First Bakla" tag is always made in fondness and in pride; by his career, wealth and connection, Ricky has proven that gender should never be cause for social incapacity and discrimination.

The following week, you had a picture in the dailies of the First Gentleman being given a haircut by "Mother" right at the Helping Hand Foundation.

The First Spouse continues to seek his place in the national scheme of things, and Pasig and livelihood are among such places. He has even asked a friend what new title to give the Office of the First Lady (hmm, a question with no precedent) for surely it can't be called that (no suggestions in text messages, please).

As soon as the Ramoses were perceived to be back in power, Ricky's mansion in Valle Verde 6 teemed with callers, from politicians to wannabe political appointees, while Tita Ming remained ensconced in a "safe house," safely hidden from favor seekers. Like rock climbing, social climbing in Manila calls for perfect timing and stamina. (Perhaps not many know that Ricky is also close to **Guia Gomez** for the two go many decades back in San Juan, where Ricky had his first small parlor.)

Ultimate achievement

However, that Mother Ricky remains in the power circle is, in fact, not really the ultimate achievement of this hairdresser-turned-multimillionaire; his whole life is. I realized this more than ever two nights ago

THE 'FIRST BAKLA'/ p.E4

I SEE
with silver-rimmed eyes
essenses
Rustan's
MAKATI

WITH FOUR general managers of The Peninsula Manila

FEBRUARY 1998 with David Hasselhoff of "Baywatch"

MALACAÑANG, May 29, 1955, Teresita Magsaysay's birthday

Five-star hotel diva

After 25 years as the amiable face of The Pen, Mila Magsaysay-Valenzuela is taking it easy. She leaves a void that will be hard to fill

By Donnie C. Ramirez

IN THE MILITARY, they have five-star generals. In show biz, there are five-star movies. In the hospitality trade, there are five-star hotels. But are there five-star public relations practitioners in hotel row? Yes, there are, but alas, they are a rarity. Count among this small, rarefied—and fast-vanishing—breed of hotel PRs the gracious and elegant Mila Magsaysay-Valenzuela.

Despite the sordid state of our tourism, we can lay claim to having some of the region's most luxurious and extravagant hotels. One of them is the venerable Peninsula Manila. Its imposing lobby is a certified power venue, a place to people-watch. It is where politicians hatch their secret agendas; where industry movers close multimillion-peso deals; and where the beautiful people take their one-for-the-road after an evening of carousing. Truly, the Peninsula Manila, or simply The Pen, has earned its stars and its distinctive appendix "venerable."

No doubt, savvy, class and quality of service have a lot to do with its reputation. But also a vital factor in the Pen's success story is Mila Magsaysay-Valenzuela.

Living pillar

Ms V, as she is known to Pen-folk, was the hotel's director of public relations until her retirement last Jan. 31. Having joined the hotel even before it officially opened on September 1976, it is no laughing matter when friends teasingly call her "one of the living pillars of the Pen."

"I was hired April 1, 1976," Mila recalls. "That was six months before the Peninsula Manila opened. My position at hiring was social director." When she retired after nearly 25 years of continuous service, she was both social director and PR director.

MALACAÑANG
bahay kubo, 1956

Keen observers of the hospitality and tourism industry agree that she has left a void that will be hard to fill. Indeed, if there's anyone who deserves the billing "Five-Star Hotel PR Diva," it's Ms V. Always gentle and gracious, never pushy and overbearing, she wins respect and admiration from everyone, including jaded members of media.

Mila's pedigree, which is nothing less than enviable, suited her for the job. Her father Ramon Magsaysay is one of the most-admired Presidents of the Philippines. Her mother is the still beautiful Luz Banzon-Magsaysay, whose role as first lady always came second to being wife to the President and mother to their children. Mila is the second of three presidential children, the two others being Teresita (now deceased) and Incumbent Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., who proved himself his father's worthy son with his valiant stand in the historic impeachment hearing that brought about the collapse of Joseph Estrada's governance.

Solid education

Mila attended St. Scholastica's College Manila for elementary and high school and went to Maryknoll (now Miriam College) for her Associate in Arts. She earned her bachelor's diploma in political science at the University of Santo Tomas and then took up postgraduate courses at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts and John Robert Powers in New York.

She married lawyer-banker Cesar Valenzuela of Bacolod and Bulacan in 1961. Their union has been blessed with three children—Rafael, an ophthalmologist; Michael, a La Salle Christian Brother; and Gabriel, who passed away in 1983.

Mila sounded relaxed—even chirpy—when I talked to her for this article. "Oh, I certainly miss the hotel," she admits. "But after working for 25 years, with all its concomitant excitement and stress, I find it a bliss just taking it easy and enjoying the little pleasures that I missed while working, like being with my family and spending more time with my mother."

What about future plans?

"I'm not fading to oblivion, just changing gears," she tells me with a smile. "Perhaps, I'll do some civic work or PR consultancy. I will surely help my brother campaign for his reelection. But right now, I'm simply enjoying my retirement too much to think about what I will do next. For the moment, I'd rather concentrate on my daily walking drill to keep in shape and taking care of my five pet doves!"

WITH HEINZ Waldvogel and First Lady Ming Ramos, Malacañang, 1993

WITH GINA de Ocampo, Burt Bacharach and Rosary Ysmael

SILVER wedding anniversary: (seated) Ms Luz Banzon Magsaysay, Mila M. Valenzuela; (standing, from left) Dr. Rafael Valenzuela (son), Cesar Valenzuela (Mila's husband) and brother Mike Valenzuela

The 'First Bakla' meets the First Gentleman

(From page E1)

as I read his biography. (The book "Hair Majesty" was launched last night at Edsa Shangri-La and is available at National Bookstore.)

Like many in the media, I've known Ricky for two decades now. I've witnessed some of the happy and sad details of his life, but reading it in full—as written so eloquently by veteran writer/editor **Abe Florendo**, with introduction by Ricky's lifetime companion **Cris Aquino**—is something else.

One noon, years ago, from his hair salon in Greenhills, he dragged me to lunch. It was obvious that he wanted not to give me a haircut, he just wanted company. He said he had just come from court where he slapped his father a P2.8 million check, "to leave us alone," he told me. (Apparently, the father had been causing them trouble. He never saw him again after that.)

Over a meal that must have been left undigested, he began to tell me that he was the eldest—his dad's namesake—in an illegitimate brood. But unlike his brothers who somehow got close to his father, he was never accepted by the old man even long before the father knew he was gay.

Last year, as we visited Ethel in the hospital, the doctor admiringly told Ricky how much she had read about his beautiful home in Valle Verde. As a matter of fact, Ricky told the woman cardiologist that he built that for his mother—as an assurance that mother and children would never be kicked out of their home again. He narrated to the doctor how he and his siblings grew up with the ability to pack their belongings in the middle of the night, ready to leave their home in the cloak of darkness so that their neighbors wouldn't see. Their mother was ashamed to let their neighbors know that they had failed to pay rent again. So to Ricky, these beautiful homes are a psychological shelter to their mother who's now in her twilight years.

The book composes into an integral whole these loose stories told us by Ricky through the years. At his birth, his father didn't want to sign his name on the certificate—refusing to give him recognition. His mother supported her brood by working in a beauty-parlor and selling jewelry. Ricky wanted to learn hairstyling at Realistic but his mother didn't have the money. Today, Ricky's salon in Quiapo is where the old Realistic used to be.

Deprivation

Ricky's life is marked by returns to a past of deprivation so he could fill up those fragments, no matter how late in the day. His first familiarity with haircutting happened in those free courses offered by the then Social Welfare Administration; today with his free haircutting workshops ("Isang Suklay, Isang Gunting") all over the country, he is perhaps reaching out to downtrodden men, women and gays who want but have no means to learn the trade.

Still trying hard to finish college, he worked in a small parlor—as janitor for P20 and hairdresser for P40. He'd attend early morning classes, go back to the parlor later in the day, and go back to school at night. When the need to support his family outweighed the need for a college diploma, he saved up for a parlor of his own, a hole in the wall literally with a flooded toilet. He and his siblings subsisted on *galunggong*, so that they mastered all the tricks of cooking it.

To the day he died, father and gay son never shared a life. I remember Ricky telling us how at his father's wake, he glanced over the casket and could only mutter, "*Sayang*," that they could have had a fulfilling bond had father given the son a chance.

No matter that I know only too well the wackiness of its subject, reading the book about this gay man left me teary-eyed. The story of his success and fortune is inspiring—it restores your faith in the goodness of life—but that life also had an unresolved chapter with a father, who was as macho as they come.

It should be the ultimate irony that no less than the First Man in the country has sought to connect to this disowned gay son. If only his father could see him now.

Behind the story of this great wealth is a love withheld. Retold around Valentine's.

E-mail the author at tsanjuan@link.com.ph

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Romancing with pearls

A STRAND of gold-colored South Sea pearls from Jewelmer is an ideal gift for Valentine.

MORE than any other gem, pearls are considered the most mystical of all, having been revered as a priceless treasure for centuries since man first discovered its value. It has been portrayed in legends as a prize to woo the heart of a desired woman's heart. It has been used as a "peace offering" in ancient wars. Many stories were told explaining how this gem came to be, each a reflection of the magical allusions associated with it.

Greeks believed that pearls came from lightning when it struck the sea. To the Hindus they were dewdrops fallen at night into the sea and collected on the body of the oyster. A Hindu legend also said that the Lord Krishna discovered the pearl at the greatest depth of the sea and offered it to his daughter, Pandaia, as a gift for her wedding. Since then, Indians made sure that no wedding takes place without giving pearls to the bride for luck.

Pearls have also been linked with romance. It was believed that the gem came from the drops that fell from the body of Venus, the goddess of love, as she stepped out of an oyster.

The mythical beliefs associated with pearls can be attributed to their mysterious beauty. Pearls reflect an inner glow not found in any other gem. They can be likened to a woman whose inner beauty shines through her whole being. There seems to be an inner energy coming from this gem, which bounces back to the wearer. A writer shared how a strand of pearls seemed to transform her, the golden colors lightening the color of her eyes and skin. It is amazing how a gem can have such depth and lustrousness, almost as if it has a life, a spirit of its own.

It is for these reasons (and more) that pearls make an ideal gift for loved ones this Valentine season. Pearls themselves are romantic, a symbol of all that is pure. It is the perfect gift to embody the love that one feels for another. After all, genuine love is pure.

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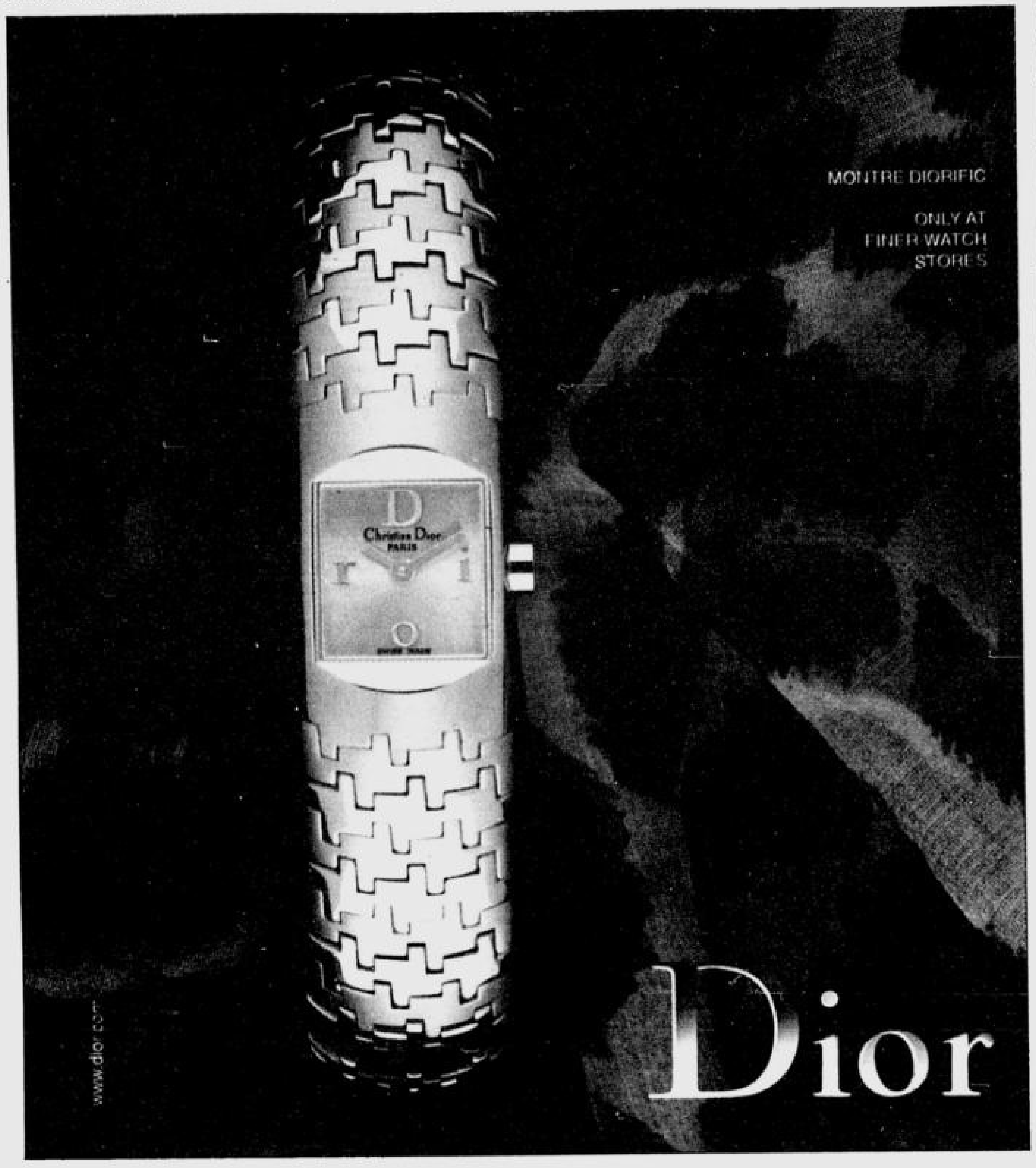
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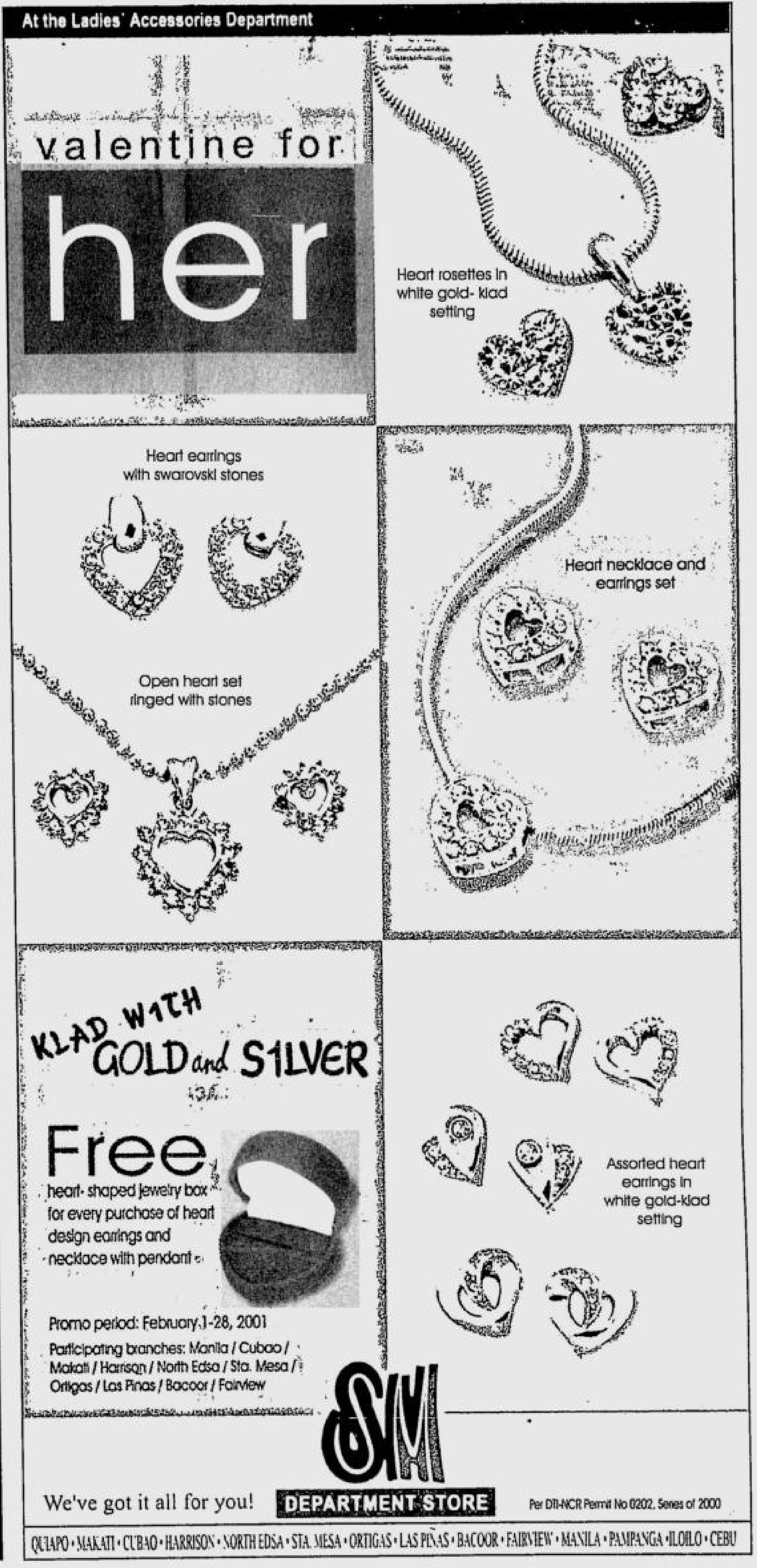
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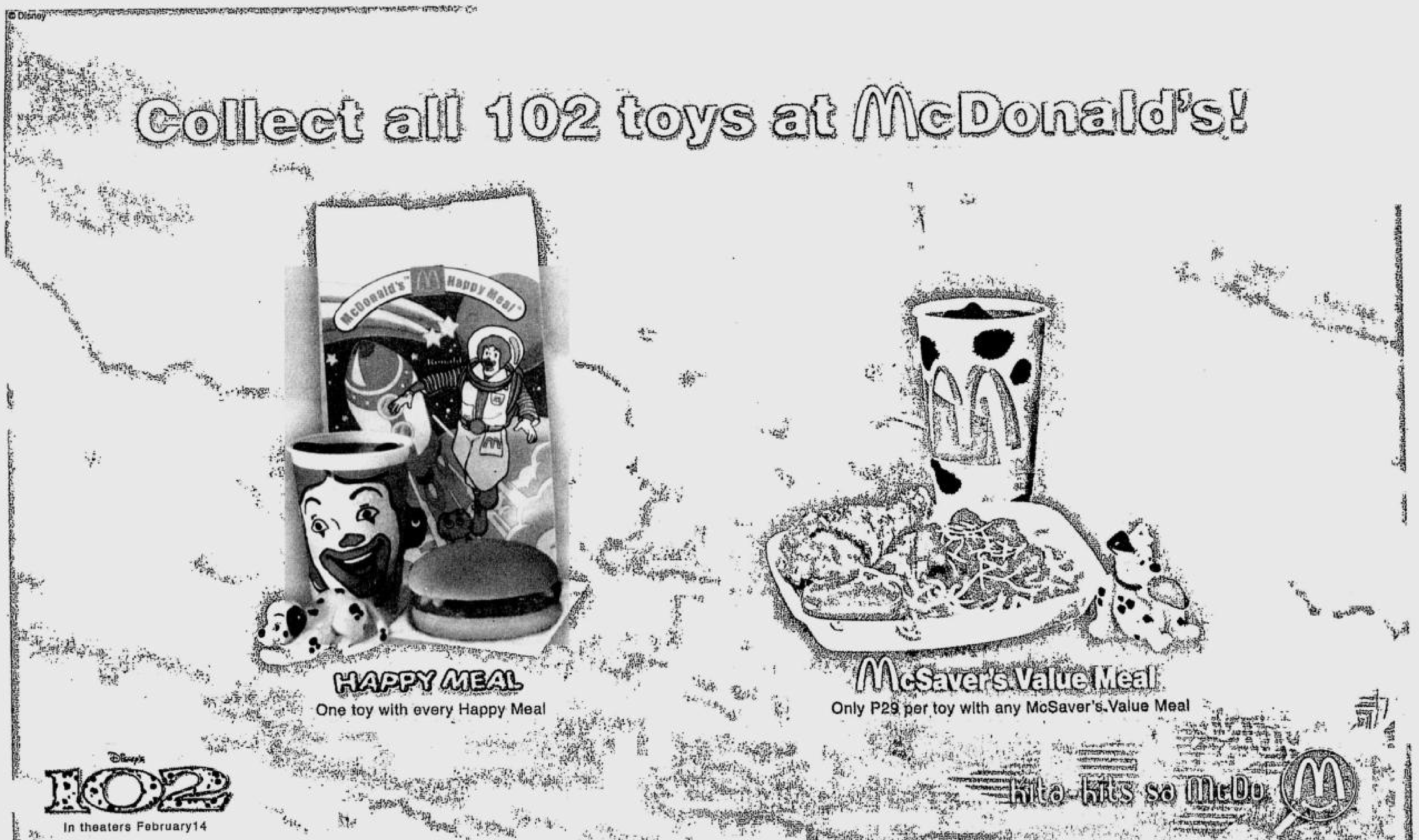
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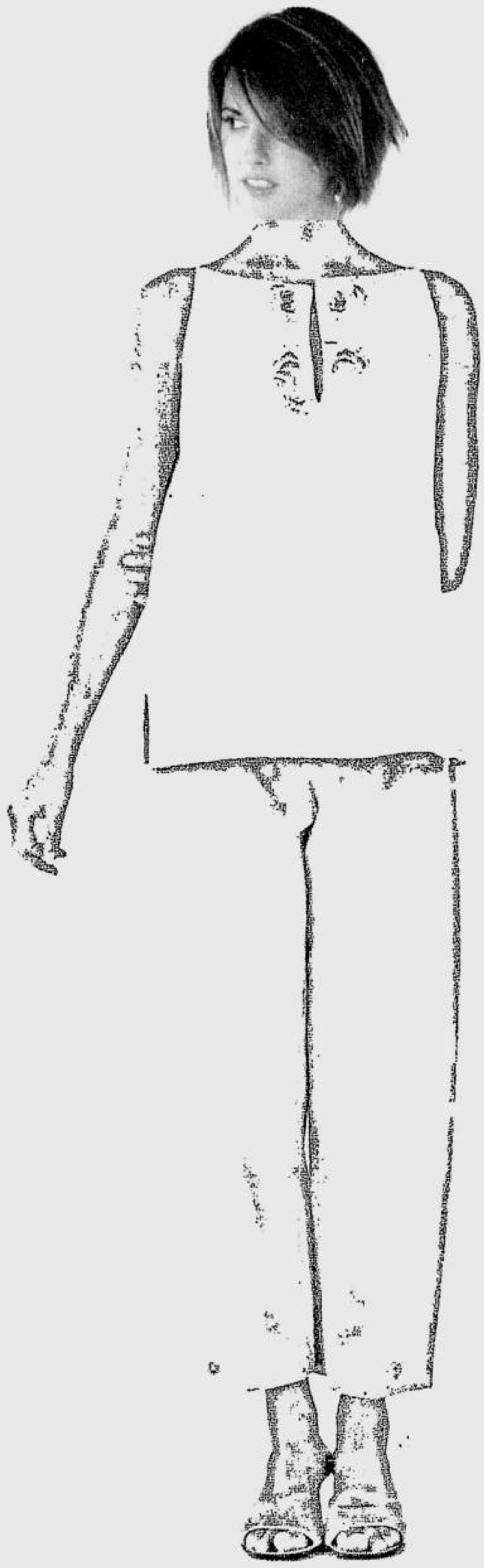

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Hanging around New York hangouts

By Cherish Garcia-Hernandez

If your ego can't take rejection, forget it. Even if you grace Manila society pages every day, you're just another tourist in New York

NEXT to L.A., New York is the best place for celebrity spotting. Over the years, we've run into Dustin Hoffman strolling by himself in Central Park, Diane Keaton waiting for a table at Sarabeth's, the place to be for brunch on weekends, Farrah Fawcett at the St. Regis, and Nicole Kidman entering Serendipity's for a late lunch. On the streets, I have seen Spike Lee, Katie Holmes, Goldie Hawn and Brian Donoughey, all somewhere on the Upper East Side. But actors and actresses warrant nothing but a second glance here. What with all the gorgeous models running up and down the city on their way to shoots and go-sees.

A friend once said New York is a bachelor's paradise. I actually think it is a bachelorette's paradise as well. The number of gorgeous men and women scattered on the streets of Manhattan is really eye candy. Since New York is the hub of the world fashion and the world of modeling, does this come as a surprise?

Where do they hang out, these modern day muses—reed thin, "boys with boobs" to quote Tom Wolfe, they with the perpetually bored look? A sure bet would be the temples of beauty—musts for their high-maintenance upkeep. Hairdressers Brad Johns, Frederick Fekkai, Garren and colorist Louis Licari surely have at least one on their appointment book per day. They could be getting their nails done at Rescue, having a facial at Bliss, or having their eyebrows plucked by Eliza Petrescu at the Avon Center.

New York is all about dining and restaurants like Nobu, Tabla (excellent Naan breads), or Jean Georges are always great for people watching. However, models don't eat, so their presence in these places is intermittent.

But New York is all about the nightlife and these models go out. Unfortunately, there is a complicated hierarchy system in the bar scene. During the '70s, places like Studio 54 or Nell's made popular the dreaded velvet rope. Though this undemocratic mode of entrance faded away in the '80s, it has returned with a vengeance today. Bouncers and "door whores" don't let you in unless you're a celebrity or you carry a $5,000 handbag

To top it all off, most hotspots are located in the most hidden of locations without even a sign to identify them. They remain a secret among those in the know for about six months. At the first sign of ordinary people invading, these "in" places become "so six months ago" and the powers that be avoid them like the plague. However, New York's nightlife is so alive and there are enough clubs, bars and models to go around. Sometimes you get lucky.

Hostile hospitality

In January '98, the restaurant Balthazar had just opened. It was the place to be. Even today it is difficult to get a reservation, and back then it was impossible. It was a Friday evening and four of us bravely ventured out to Soho to see what the buzz was about. Outside there was a huge crowd. Two of us, the girls, elbowed our way in and feigned innocence and asked, "Would it be possible to get a table for four?" The hostess leered at us and just as she was about to spit us out, Keith McNally, the owner, turned around, seemingly amused at our ignorance. He smiled and pointed to a table that was just vacated and said, "You can stay here if you don't mind the draft." Much to the hostess' consternation we called our dates and waltzed in and lo and behold, right beside us was Supermodel Amber Valetta. (My husband spent the rest of the evening wondering if she looked okay—as if!) Though Balthazar is still always booked (the food is great), McNally has moved on and opened up another hotspot, Pastis, in the now trendy meat packing district.

Last summer, we checked out Pravda on Lafayette Street. Of course, its heyday was two years ago when on any given night Naomi Campbell or Christy Turlington nursed her vodka from the club's wide selection. Its entrance looks like subway stairs and this underground bar has no sign of life on street level. Downstairs it's a happening place still populated with beautiful people. Pravda looks like a cave. Upstairs near the bathrooms there's a requisite "make-out" lounge where a few people have their own private party. The bouncer readily lets anyone through nowadays because it isn't so hot anymore. Same goes for Spy on Greene Street which now hosts Wall Street guys hitting on the new ingénue models.

The buzz last summer was Commune, which is actually a restaurant, whose Chef Matthew Kenney is a favorite, having successfully run Matthew's uptown and Canteen in Soho. We checked it out with a friend who is a *bon vivant* of sorts, after a great dinner at Mercer Kitchen, another place to see and be seen. The crowd is definitely fashionable and, as always, I felt like the resident midget amidst a sea of model types. I always grab the first available bar stool to add a little height. Drink of choice? Cosmopolitans, of course. The ultimate New York drink of the year. Commune has a long rectangular bar and the crowd spills out to some open-air seating. I liked it because it was lively but not jam-packed.

Another Friday night we met up with this friend in the very new Church Lounge, which is actually located in the Atrium of the TriBeCa Grand Hotel. Its Cathedral-like setting is emphasized by 80 paraffin votive candles on one wall. The bartenders are gorgeous but slow, and more models abound. "Hey, is that Laeticia Casta?" After a few drinks it's hard to tell.

Hotel bars

According to the New York Times, there is a resurgence of hotel bars. Aside from Church lounge, there's Rande Gerber's (Cindy Crawford's husband) Whiskey Blue located at the W Hotel. This place is definitely still "in" judging from the line that forms outside its velvet ropes night after night, while a bouncer with a secret-service type earpiece anoints a chosen few. Luckily this winter, we were staying at the W, and hotel guests have a separate entrance and are of course, always allowed access. The bar has minimalist décor and high ceilings and couches against the wall with black- and-white photos hung above them. There are more guys than girls here and I doubt that a decent-looking woman could actually stand alone for more than five minutes. The bartenders are all women, sexily clad, I must say.

There's also the Hudson Bar at Ian Schrager's new Midtown Hudson Hotel. This place looks like a sci-fi canteen with an illuminated white disco floor, Philippe Starck furniture and Lucite chairs. The crowd is eclectic with both celebrities and country cousins rubbing elbows.

Still, there are hotspots and there are HOT spots. Moomba, which had Leo (of that sinking ship) coming in night after night with his posse the year it opened, remains the place to see and be seen. For fans of "Sex and the City," this was the bar where Carrie and Samantha were perpetually turned away. Even if you do get in, it is the third-floor VIP room that counts. Here you can karaoke away with models Yasmeen Bleeth and Giselle Bundchen and various band members from the Black Crows and Foo Fighters. Cast members from "Friends" and "Popular" also frequent this place. Another new place is Luahn in the East Village. This place has velvet ropes all the way to the bathroom and is dominated by the fashion police. At Lot 61 in Chelsea there are perpetually reserved seats in the back lounge area and at the West Village's Halo, you can chat with Harrison Ford while sandwiched between two aspiring Supermodels. Visiting New York is always like the first day of the rest of your life, you'll never know what will happen. Go with the flow; check out the exciting new places and chances are you'll get in. But if your ego can't take rejection, forget it. Even if you grace the society pages of your hometown regularly, you're just another tourist in New York.

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